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Welcome

Welcome to *Windows: The Official Magazine,* the only computer magazine approved by Microsoft. Looking at our main story this issue, you'd be forgiven for wondering where the time has got to. Windows 8? Already? It seems like only yesterday we were hailing the arrival of Windows 7, many features of which have become indispensable to our day-to-day lives. It's amazing to think how quickly we've become accustomed to the ease and simplicity of jump lists, pop-up window previews from the taskbar and other advances.

But time marches on and Windows 8 promises to be a revolution, rather than an evolution, in the way we use our computers, be they desktop machines, laptops or tablets. Turn to page 26 now to discover the exciting developments that are waiting just around the corner.

As always, please feel free to drop me a line at the email address below and let me know what you think of the issue. Enjoy!

Adam

Adam Ifans Editor-in-Chief
adam.ifans@futurenet.com

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Our exclusive relationship with the company behind Windows, Windows Phone, Office and much more, gives us unrivalled access to the movers and shakers in the world of computing. From details on upcoming software and new versions of Windows, to insider tips and tricks for getting the most from Internet Explorer and your favourite websites, you can trust us to deliver everything you need to get more from your computer.

Windows The Official Magazine

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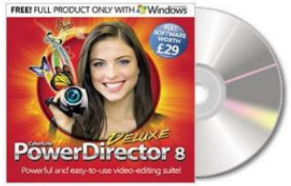

ON YOUR FREE DISC

The full version of video editing software PowerDirector 8 Deluxe

Use it! We show you how to get to grips with PowerDirector on page 54

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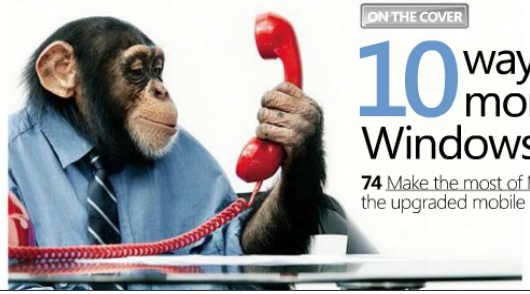

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Keeping it wheel!

MASTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT WITH YOUR COMPUTER

Make waiting around in the rain for a delayed bus a thing of the past with these essential travel information websites

Public transport in the UK is great for getting around and our PCs can make our journeys as smooth and as enjoyable as possible.

You may already be familiar with Google Maps (http://maps.google.co.uk), which is excellent for giving you directions by car. But did you know it could also tell you how to get to places by public transport? Just type in where you are and where you want to go, then click the middle train icon. You're then given directions, and bus, train and underground information. Even better, you're given the service numbers and how many stops they make before you need to get off – ideal if you're going somewhere new. Bing Maps (www.bing.com/maps) offers a similar service.

The Transport Direct website (www.transportdirect.info) goes even further. You can set your destination, transport choice and how many changes you want to make, and includes a link to a map and live departure boards for trains. To view the departure boards for any train station go to the National Rail Enquiries website at www.nationalrail.co.uk and click 'Live departure boards'. If a train is delayed or cancelled, you'll be able to see here, saving you a wasted trip to the station.

Buying tickets online and in advance is a great way to save money. For train journeys go to www.thetrainline.com. Type in the stations, dates and other relevant info and you'll be given train times and prices – with the cheapest fares highlighted. You can then get your tickets posted to your home, or choose to pick them up from the station. The National Express website (www.nationalexpress.com) is great for booking coach, bus and train journeys too. The fantastic money saving website Money Saving Expert has its own travel section at www.moneysavingexpert.com/travel, which can help keep travelling costs down.

> "PCs can make our journeys as smooth and enjoyable as possible"

Need inspiration about where you can visit using public transport? Go to www.landmarktrust.org.uk, which describes some of the most beautiful areas of the UK, plus public transport links. If you're going to London and using public transport, make sure you go to www.visitlondon.com/travel to get great ideas for your visit.

HERE'S WHERE TO START *Plan your trip*

If you need to know how to get somewhere via public transport, head over to www.bing.com/maps. Click 'Get directions' and then in the 'A' text box type your start location and your destination in the 'B' box. Next, click the middle icon of the train, then select the date and time you want to leave. You'll then be given a list of routes and the time they take. Click the shortest one, and hey presto – your travel itinerary pops up! Using public transport has never been so easy.

DO YOU KNOW THE WAY TO...? Click here to get directions between two or more places

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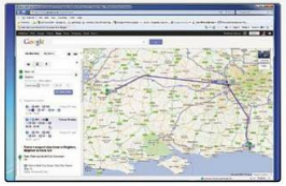

TRAVELPEDIA Whether bus, train or Underground, Google Maps tells you what to get and when

The Knowledge...

Smart TV

Do Smart TVs watch you as you watch them?
Not exactly. A smart TV can connect to the internet, so you can watch YouTube, BBC iPlayer, 4OD, ITV Player and other online services. Smart TVs offer fantastic new ways to watch your favourite programmes. You can even stream new films from LOVEFiLM.

So it's just like having a Windows PC on a TV then?
Not really. Smart TVs have a pared-down interface – more like Windows Media Center – which makes it easier to use on a TV with a remote. It's an attractive and easy to use interface, but it isn't suitable for more advanced tasks, like word processing.

So can I just hook my TV up to my network?
No. Your TV needs to be a smart TV to work straight out of the box. It needs to have an Ethernet network port at the back to be able to connect to your router, though some smart TVs have wireless adapters sold separately.

But I just got a new TV that isn't a smart TV...
If you want to get most of the benefits of a smart TV without having to buy one, you can get a set-top box like the O!Play Mini Plus Smart TV Set-Top Box, which can connect to the internet. It's not as compact as a smart TV, but means you don't have to upgrade.

What's so good about smart TVs anyway?
It means you get to watch streamed programmes and films on the big screen. With your TV able to access the internet, a world of entertainment is open up to you. Almost every genre is covered from all over the world. Smart TVs are a fantastic example of new technology mixing with old.

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WINDOWS INSIDER
EXPOSING YOUR PC'S SECRETS

MICROSOFT CONFIDENTIAL

IAN MOULSTER, MICROSOFT UK

Windows 7

Secure your USB flash drive

Imagine the situation – you lose your flash drive and it ends up in the hands of a criminal. The thief pokes around in your precious files and your private information gets into the wrong hands. What a nightmare! But there's a solution: encryption. If you're lucky enough to have a copy of Windows 7 Ultimate, you can right-click the flash drive icon from the Computer menu and select 'Turn on BitLocker' to start the process. Other versions of Windows lack the BitLocker facility, but there's a free application that does the same thing – you'll find TrueCrypt at www.truecrypt.org.

Windows Vista

Change your password

When was the last time you changed your Windows password? Security professionals recommend that a password should last for a maximum of about four months, and we're willing to bet you've had yours for longer than that. Windows Vista includes a super-quick way of changing your user account password at any time. Just hit [Ctrl]+[Alt]+[Delete] at the same time to bring up a menu screen, then choose 'Change a password'. All you have to do now is make sure you remember the new password – if you don't, you'll be locked out of Windows!

Windows XP

Protect your personal files

If you have documents you'd rather keep secret, you're in luck. Windows XP includes an easy way to lock them with your user account password. In XP Professional, drag and drop the files you want to protect into a single folder, right-click the folder, click 'Properties', then click the 'Advanced' button. Check the box marked 'Encrypt contents to secure data' and they'll be locked up tight. In XP Home, just put your folder full of files in your My Documents folder – only your user account will be able to access them. ■

Struggling to get something to work? Need a tip?
Then email us your woes (to windowsmagazine@futurenet.com with the subject line 'Windows Insider') and we'll share your perfect Windows tweaks in a future issue.

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The full version of Microsoft Office isn't free. You may not be able to afford it – a few of us on the Official Windows Magazine team don't have a copy. Google has been building something of a monopoly over the online office field, but if you have a web connection and a Windows Live login, you can use Microsoft's online versions of its office suite for free. This works seamlessly with SkyDrive, which stores documents and files online. Just go to http://office.microsoft.com and click one of the links below 'Select a web app to create your document' – you'll be taken to the Windows Live login screen. Enter your username and password to see your SkyDrive file list. Name your document, click 'Create', and you're away. ■

Download this...

Microsoft Security Essentials

www.windows.microsoft.com/mse

Windows 7 has many built-in security features, but having an additional line of defence in the form of an antivirus program is never a bad idea. In fact, it's invariably a good one. There really is no excuse, especially when there's a free option out there from Microsoft that dovetails into Windows 7 perfectly. Once you've installed it, Microsoft Security Essentials sits in the background, quietly protecting your computer from viruses and malware. It's not as potent or powerful as some of the paid-for options out there, but it'll do a good job of freezing out most of the internet nasties you come into contact with.

NASTY BUSINESS Microsoft Security Essentials helps keep viruses away

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NEXT ISSUE ON SALE
MARCH 2012
16
FRIDAY

Everyone's talking about...

SHOULD YOU BUY OR STREAM MUSIC?

Why it's full stream ahead for the future of music listening

Like it or not, the concept of consumers 'owning' music is a dying dream. The likelihood is that the next generation in your family will never buy a CD or spin a record. There will be no walls in houses dedicated to music collections. It's on the way out and there's nothing you can do to stop it. Nothing.

There are many reasons for the decline of physical media formats, but it comes down to a few key causes. Availability, convenience and piracy are the key ones if you'll excuse us boiling down a highly contentious subject into three words.

So, given that physical formats are on the way out, should you be buying MP3s online or paying for a streaming, from the likes of Spotify or Napster?

We reckon it's time to step into the cloud and go for streaming. It's economical and brings with it delights never dreamed of in the analogue music world. Let's say the average conservative music fan buys one album a month, with an average cost of £10. That £10 nets you as many listens as you like of those – let's say 12 – songs. But pay £10 a month to Spotify or Napster, and you'll bag yourself streaming access to tens of millions of songs in high quality, and as many times as you like.

Of course, with these services you don't actually own any music, you're merely renting it on a monthly basis. But if you're spending £10 a month anyway, why not have access to as much music as you can handle instead of one album?

With Spotify you can still download any songs you like, so you'll still have access to your favourite music when you're offline. But of course, if you end your subscription it'll all disappear, so you're making a commitment when you sign up.

There are other issues to address, such as sound quality. Audiophiles will be buying CDs until the very last second they're available, but sound quality matters to us regular folk as well. With a Spotify Premium subscription your music can be streamed and downloaded at 320kbps, which is about as good as it gets for compressed music files. Napster on the other hand has a slightly larger catalogue of music, but the streaming quality is significantly lower (just 64kbps is you're on a mobile device). It's noticeable even to the undiscerning ear.

> "Streaming brings delights never dreamed of in the analogue world"

So make no mistake, in 10 years' time, we'll all be streaming music to our mobile devices, to our homes and to our cars. The cloud is where music will be stored in the future. In that future, you're going to pay a subscription, so you might as well start now. Any album you pay to download today will be available on those future streaming services, and we can't think of a single reason to pay twice. ■

THE 60-SECOND QUIZ

Pens at the ready, your time starts now!

1 On which of the following platforms is Spotify not available?
A) Windows
B) Android
C) Platform 6, Paddington Station, London

2 MP3 is the most popular digital music format, but what does it stand for?
A) Music Patent 3
B) MPEG-2 Audio Layer III
C) MPEG-3

3 True or false: the original term used for cloud streaming was 'raining'?
A) True
B) False

4 Music website Napster was named after what?
A) Its founder's hairstyle
B) Its founder's love of afternoon naps
C) Its founder's penchant for collecting frilly French napkins

5 Napster launched in which year?
A) 1998
B) 1999
C) 2000

6 True or false: 'the cloud' is made from a mix of methane, ozone and carbon monoxide?
A) True
B) False

Answers
1 It's available on all three
2 B
3 B
4 A
5 B
6 B

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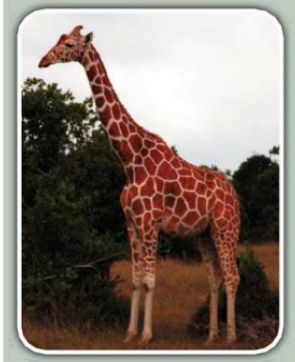
26 NOV - 3 DEC 2012



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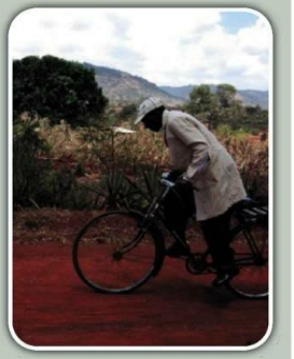

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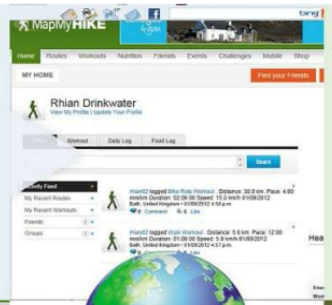
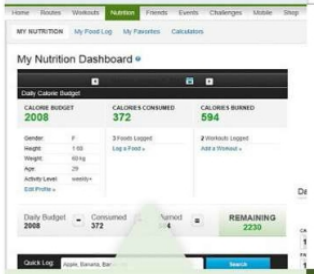
1 My home

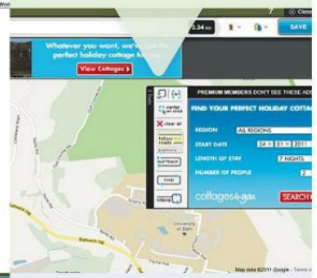
MapMyHIKE is a fitness website that enables you to bring together the two main parts of any health regime – nutrition and exercise – and track them both day by day. Create an account, give it some basic information about yourself, such as weight, height and activity level, and then start logging meals and exercise. Of course, if you want to just use one or the other that's fine – tailor your use to what you want to get out of it. From the Home screen it's easy to log a simple workout. Just tell it what you did and for how long.



2 Plan your route

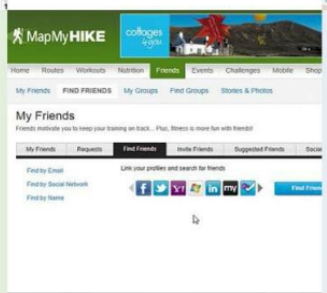
Through the site can record most types of exercise, it's obviously most tailored towards walking, hiking, running or cycling. If you're planning any of these in advance, you can use the MapMyHIKE route section to plan your trip and even look at a 3D route flyover. You can then print a map if needed. There are simple tutorials to follow and it's easy to stick to pavement routes or go off-road as you wish. And once you're done, you can log it as a workout as often as you like. Perfect for the morning bike ride into work.





4 My Nutrition Dashboard

The other side of the equation, of course, is your diet. Use this My Nutrition Dashboard to log your meals and snacks. Most food and drink you can think of has already been set up, so you can just search, then click 'I ate this', though foods are a little US-centric. You get a daily calorie budget based on your height and weight, and how much exercise you're doing. We wouldn't advice getting into calorie counting, but it's a good way to make sure you're not taking in far too much or too little.



3 Friends

You can search for people you know on the site using most social networks, or look for people or groups that are local to you. The groups on the site enable you to easily interact with a set of people, whether they're everyone else who's training for a particular marathon, your local running club and so on. Once you've joined a group, you can see how much activity everyone else is up to and comment. Don't worry though, you can choose not to share any of your own information!

Discover this... + Spotify Apps

Music to our ears

The world of apps has arrived at music-streaming service Spotify

Apps – small programs that tend to do just one simple thing very well – have revolutionised smartphones. But that's not all they're for. Spotify has recently introduced apps into its own program and, just as with the phone apps we're used to, they're created by third parties to give a new world of creativity and ideas in one place.

Make sure you're running the latest version, click on 'App Finder' in the left-hand column, then take a look at what's there. The library isn't very big at the moment, but it does include apps such as TuneWiki, which displays the lyrics to the songs you're listening to, and *The Guardian* reviews app, for keeping on top of the latest products.

ON THE COUCH...

with psychologist Joanna Bawa

We analyse Maurice Anderson's desktop

Windows The Official Magazine Institute of Desktop Psychology

WINDOWS ICONS

A SET OF TIDY ICONS INDICATE A SENSE OF COMPETENCE AND BALANCE – A PRACTICAL PERSON WHOSE YEARNING FOR OPEN SPACES AND ADVENTURE IS IN CONFLICT WITH THEIR IMMEDIATE COMMITMENTS. NEVERTHELESS, THE PEACEFUL IMAGE SUGGESTS THAT, AT SOME LEVEL, A RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT HAS BEEN FOUND.

DESKTOP WALLPAPER

THIS BUCOLIC IMAGE IS AT ONCE SMALL AND ENORMOUS, DEPICTING TINY SHELTERS UNDER A HUGE TREE AND VAST SKY. THE CONTRAST OF DOMESTICITY WITH WILDERNESS SUGGESTS AN INDIVIDUAL WITH BIG IDEAS WHO HAS YET TO TAKE ACTION, PERHAPS HELD BACK BY A RELUCTANCE TO GIVE UP PRESENT SECURITY.

WINDOWS SIDEBAR

A PHOTO OF A FARAWAY PLACE IN THE SIDEBAR IS A GLIMPSE INTO THE POTENTIAL, AS YET UNREALISED, THAT THIS PERSON SEES IN THEIR FUTURE. THE SUNLIT OPEN DOOR WITHIN THE ANCIENT WALL IS AN OPTIMISTIC SYMBOL, AS LIGHT CAN EVEN BE SEEN ON THE OTHER SIDE.

JOANNA BAWA'S EXPERT DIAGNOSIS

This is someone whose dreams and ambitions are currently on hold, but who has made the decision to put them there. Practical matters are the focus of attention, but a positive outlook and ability to delay gratification suggest these ambitions will become reality. **Joanna Bawa is a fully-qualified Chartered Occupational Psychologist**

MAURICE ANDERSON THE PATIENT

"On first inspection I thought the verdict was quite remarkable, but looking closer at it, the comments aren't completely accurate. The first point is partly correct, in that I am a very tidy person, but I'm certainly not aware of any conflicts in my life. And being 80 years of age, I don't have dreams or ambitions because I have realised most of them."

HOW TO CURE YOUR DESKTOP

It's a shame to spoil Maurice's beautiful desktop image by letting sidebar gadgets run over it on the right-hand side. Drag and drop them to the top of the desktop to make the most of it.

SEND IN YOUR DESKTOP!

Do you want to know what your desktop says about you? Then send us a picture – minimise all windows and press **Print Screen**. Open Paint and click **Edit** then **Paste**. Save the file as a PNG and email it to **windowsmagazine@futurenet.com** with the subject line '**My desktop**'. Include your name and a photo of yourself.

The smarter guide to technology. Whichever way you look at it.

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DJ Roberto

DIGITAL LIFE

CAPITAL FM DJ ROBERTO TELLS US WHAT HE GETS UP TO ON HIS COMPUTER AND ON THE WEB

Occupation: *DJ*
I started on the early breakfast shift on Capital FM and I've worked up to presenting the mid-morning show from 10am. I've also been a newspaper columnist, established myself as a worldwide voiceover artist and DJ'ed around the world. Tune in to Capital FM to celebrate its first year of being heard across the UK!

This... or that?

North or south? *North* Marmite or marmalade? *Marmite* Classical or rock? *Classical* Ebook or paper? *Ebook* Darwin or God? *Darwin* Radio 2 or Radio 4? *Capital FM!* Big Daddy or Giant Haystacks? *Big Daddy* Country or city? *City* Summer or winter? *Summer* Smart or casual? *Mix it up – smart/casual* Day or night? *Night* Yes or no? *Yes!*

▶ The first thing I do when I turn my computer on is to get some music on. That might be from iTunes, internet radio or streaming from Spotify – it just depends on what mood I'm in and what I fancy listening to.

▶ Twitter's an addiction. I'm always on it. I love the here and now-ness. It's so immediate and current, and gives a bit of power to the people. That's not always a good thing, when you see some of the stuff that trends!

▶ My homepage is www.netvibes.com. It's a brilliant website – I open my browser and everything I want to know is right there in front of me.

▶ I love my gadgets. For my favourite, I'm torn between my iPad 2 and my electric drum kit. The iPad is practically attached to my body and I have hours of fun playing my drum kit.

Rob's twitter

@Roberto_Capital "Off to see Shrek The Musical, all the theatre staff wear green ears, I wanna put some on!"

Add to Favourites... + Must-see websites

www.kickstarter.com
A site where would-be filmmakers, inventors and entrepreneurs post ideas and seek funding from the public. You might find yourself sponsoring the next big film or game.

www.devastatingexplosions.com
A surprisingly addictive site, where clicking a hand hovering over a button unleashes devastating explosions. It's all part of a promotion for Old Spice.

www.eyebombing.com
Friendly ashtrays, sad paper towel dispensers and ecstatic fire extinguishers. Who'd have thought attaching eyes to inanimate objects would achieve such wonderful results?

Facts & figures

Matt Hanson reveals a host of fascinating digital facts

FACEBOOK PRIVACY

Facebook makes a lot of money by selling advertisers information about its users, such as favourite bands and hobbies. Unless you change your privacy settings, Facebook is free to use your information in this way. Critics believe that Facebook makes it as difficult as possible for you to change your settings, or understand what access Facebook has to your personal information. In 2005, Facebook's privacy policy was 1,004 words long. Today it's 5,830. The US Constitution is only 4,543 words by comparison.

Family brands

The FamilyBrands survey that polled over 1,500 adults in October 2011 asked GB adults (18+ and representative of the adult population) to identify brands against a number of attributes associated with 'family' including 'socially responsible', 'caring' and 'good listeners'. Check out the best at www.familybrands.co.uk.

72 per cent of UK companies…

… admit to having lost confidential data through missing USB memory sticks. Since 2008 there have been 1,035 data-loss incidents across 132 local authorities in the UK. The UK, France and Poland have the highest rate of data breaches as the result of losing USB drives.

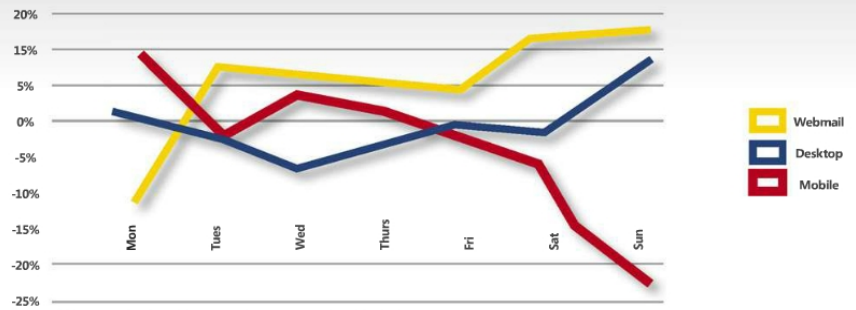
Men vs women: who's better at securing themselves on their mobile devices?

The chaps just edge it. According to Webroot research 44 per cent of men – compared to 37 per cent of women – have security services installed on their devices. Also, more than half of men (51 per cent) lock their devices versus 43 per cent of women. Check out Webroot's free SecureAnywhere mobile phone security app at http://snipurl.com/218qi3m.

In 2015…

… it's been predicted that the average household in Western Europe will generate 98.8GB of web traffic every month. Internet video traffic will grow by 31 per cent – 16 per cent of all consumer web traffic. If you think your broadband is too slow, see if you can switch providers at www.uswitch.co.uk.

HOW DAY OF THE WEEK AFFECTS WHERE EMAIL IS VIEWED



Mobile, Webmail, Desktops: Where are we viewing email now? Return Path Inc, 2011

2,000,000 THE NUMBER OF NEW MALICIOUS WEBSITES DETECTED EVERY MONTH

100,000 THE NUMBER OF NEW MALWARE SCREENED EVERY DAY

400 THE PERCENTAGE RISE IN ANDROID MOBILE MALWARE COMPARED TO 2010

£50m THE ESTIMATED GLOBAL COST OF THE ZEUS TROJAN VIRUS

110 THE AVERAGE DAYS TO FIX A SECURITY VULNERABILITY ON A WEBSITE

44 PER CENT OF WEBSITES HAVE A SERIOUS SECURITY EXPOSURE EVERY DAY

70 PER CENT OF IT PROS SAY MOBILE COMPUTING IS THE BIGGEST THREAT TO IT SECURITY

SOURCE: WWW.FIREBRANDTRAINING.CO.UK/COURSES/EC-COUNCIL/CEH-HACKING-AER

New gear...

From budget accessories to stylish PCs, there's a world of fascinating products at your fingertips

Jabra Supreme Bluetooth Headset

£100 (www.jabra.com/uk)

Jabra has an impressive range of Bluetooth headsets to choose from, but the Supreme is the current top dog. As such, a lot of effort has been made to keep ambient noise out of your conversation thanks to active noise cancellation and wind-noise reduction technology. It works too: the audio quality is top-notch and the foldable microphone easily picked up everything we said.

The Supreme will give you up to six hours of talk time and 15 hours of standby time on the battery and although it's comfortable to wear, it didn't sit as snugly against our ear as other, smaller, headsets. We had to check every so often to make sure it was still there. That said, in terms of call clarity, this is one of the best we've tested.

Toshiba Camileo B10 Camcorder

£100 (www.toshiba.co.uk)

This handheld camcorder follows in the footsteps of the famous Flipcam, giving you a full 1080p HD video recorder that sits comfortably in your palm or pocket. You can snap photos or shoot video at the press of a button, while the 2-inch screen shows you exactly what you're aiming at and allows you to play back footage.

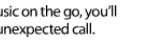
Videos are sharp enough for filming everyday life, unless you employ the 16x digital zoom, which makes everything grainy. You have a built-in flash for shooting in darkened interiors, and the mic picks up nearby voices clearly. The neat Camileo Uploader software allows you to upload videos quickly and easily to your YouTube and Facebook accounts among others, or you can attach to a TV using the included HDMI cable. You even get a (slightly pointless) mini tripod.

BullGuard Internet Security 12

£50 (www.bullguard.com)

After installing the BullGuard security software, you can set how intrusive it is – either notifying you of everything it does, or working quietly in the background and interrupting only if absolutely necessary. Dedicated firewalls and other protective measures keep you safe when browsing online. A one-year update subscription is included.

If you open BullGuard's user window to check your computer's status or run a health check, you're presented with simplicity itself. Any issues are raised one at a time, with the option to solve or ignore. If there are no issues, you get a big green tick and a reassuring message that all is well. You can then tune up your laptop, run a virus scan or even back up your essential data (including 5GB of online storage).



Instant expert

Matt Hanson
Reviews editor

Bluetooth

Created in 1994 by the Swedish telecommunication company Ericsson, Bluetooth wireless technology might have been around for a long time but recently it has seen a real upsurge in popularity. This can be attributed to its relative flexibility compared to other short-range wireless technologies.

One useful feature is the ability for Bluetooth devices to connect to up to seven devices, enabling you to switch easily between them. So you could have your smartphone connected to a Bluetooth headset and to a Bluetooth speaker. When getting calls you can use the headset to answer, and when you want to play music from your phone you can easily select the speaker, without having to reconfigure anything. Streaming music and files via Bluetooth is achievable through Bluetooth's large bandwidth – around 3 Mbit/s a second. While this is plenty for streaming music without any hit on audio quality, the Bluetooth v3.0 + HS spec introduced in '09 is capable of speeds up to 24 Mbit/s.

Idapt Universal Charger i1Eco

£20 (www.idaptweb.com)

If you've got a range of portable devices that constantly run out of juice on the road, this flexible charger from Idapt might make your life easier. Rather than stuffing a pile of chargers into your bag, just slip in this device and its changeable heads, and you can power anything with a Mini USB or Micro USB port. You also get an Apple head, to fit iPods and iPhones.

Not only can you charge your devices from your laptop's USB port, you also have 3-pin plug and car lighter adaptors. The Universal Charger is slender and light, to fit in even compact bags and cases. Overall, a highly recommended device for regular travellers who always carry their phone, MP3 player and more.

Digital Silence DS-321D Noise Cancellation Headphones

£60 (www.digital-silence.com)

If you use your smartphone to listen to music on the go, you'll know how clumsy it can be to answer an unexpected call. These headphones pump out great-sounding music, and come with a handy mic attachment so you don't even need to touch your phone if someone calls. Simply press a button beside the mic to answer and you're done.

Noise cancellation technology drowns out background noise, so you don't need to crank up the volume. You need to charge the headphones for it to work, but they'll still function as normal even when the charge runs out.

Pipetto Hunter Wanderer iPad 2 Smartcase

£100 (www.pipetto.co.uk)

This iPad 2 cover might be costly, but it's a quality product. The soft exterior is thick enough to absorb any bumps on the road, so your precious tablet stays safe, although bear in mind the added bulk if you stuff your iPad in your bag every day. You also have an expandable handle on the edge of the case, if you'd rather carry it that way.

We like the tartan design inside, although the outside fabric picks up dust and crumbs too easily. A Velcro patch holds your iPad securely, and you can access all of the ports without removing the tablet. Film fans can even bend back the cover and prop the tablet up, for watching movies hands-free. Overall this is a tough and well-built case, but covers that do much the same can be had for half the price.

Frankenspiel FS-1

£130 (www.frankenspiel.com)

Laptop speakers are often easy prey for criticism during our reviews because they're invariably tinny and lifeless with only a semblance of volume. But on the bright side, it does mean that speakers such as the Frankenspiel FS-1 get developed – which is a good thing.

This speaker set is a pair of cubes with two wires that need connecting – one to link up the speakers and another to connect to your PC via USB. When everything is in place, you're rewarded with 40 watts (impressive for USB power) of rich, stereo sound. They will fill a medium-sized room with sound without any trouble and lose none of the clarity even with the volume whacked up. Coming in a tough, rubberised carry case, the FS-1 is the perfect accompaniment to your laptop's music library.

Western Digital My Book Live

£150 (www.wdc.com)

Western Digital has a good reputation when it comes to external hard drives, and the My Book Live is no exception. The 1TB device will store 250,000 songs or 200,000 photographs and also serves as a NAS (Network Attached Storage) device for beginners.

That's because next to the power socket is an Ethernet port that plugs directly into your wireless router. The My Book Live then streams your media to all the other devices connected to it – including an iPhone or Android handset thanks to their respective apps. Everything is about simplicity here, from the curving black design of the box itself – about the size of a thick paperback novel – to the ease of setting it up. For basic users wanting some extra storage and no-hassle streaming, this is your best choice.

Proporta USB TurboCharger 5000

£43 (www.proporta.com)

Almost every smartphone we test is unable to last more than one night without a charge. Larger screens, more processing power and constant online syncing all reduce the battery life dramatically, and if you're away from home or unable to get to the mains on a regular basis, then all too often you can find yourself looking at a dead brick of a phone. The Proporta TurboCharger 5000 is a small black box, about the size of a deck of cards. It's got a moulded rubber coating, a single button and three neon-blue LED lights.

Inside is a 5,000 mAh Li-polymer battery capable of powering your smartphone, tablet, Nintendo DS Lite or PSP via a range of connectors that are included, along with a drawstring bag for holding it all. This is definitely one of the better external battery packs we've tested and the device has a high quality look and feel. If you're a heavy smartphone user or frequent traveller, this could serve you well.

Urbanista Copenhagen

£79 (http://uk.urbanista.com)

While the Urbanista Copenhagen headphones are undeniably eye-catching, we found the overall audio experience was lacking. The blazing Pink Panther folding headphones are unfortunately let down by an uncomfortable steel headband and paltry noise cancellation during playback. These headphones feature the standard 20-20,000Hz range and 3.5mm jack – but also included is a microphone built into the cord and a sturdy plastic carry case.

It's clear the Copenhagen's strength is its appearance – even the packaging proclaims the materials and colours are treated like fashion and jewellery design. So, if that's what you're looking for then you won't be disappointed. However, for this kind of money there are blander, but better, headphones to be had.

Logitech Ultimate Ears 200vi

£30 (www.logitech.com)

We noticed a bit of unwelcome reverb when using the Logitech Ultimate Ears 200vi to watch a YouTube video on our iPhone, which intruded on an otherwise excellent sound. Despite this, there's a great deal of volume to be had from these earphones and they're expertly fashioned to sit comfortably in your ear and even come with a range of silicone ear cushions in different sizes.

The noise-cancellation works well and there's an on-cord remote built in that lets you adjust volume and pause playback. This was great on the iPhone but the volume controls won't work with a non-Apple device. In short, while these are a good choice for iPhone users, others might want to look elsewhere.

Windows Mail

Write and share your thoughts on PCs, the web and your magazine...

Contact the magazine
Email us: windowsmagazine@futurenet.com
Write to us: Windows: The Official Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

Get in touch!
We really want to hear from you. Email your questions, comments, tips or complaints to us at the address below.
windowsmagazine@futurenet.com

Also contact us on facebook
www.facebook.com/windowsmag

DRIVE WIPE

My wife and I have recently bought a Dell Inspiron 15R and we're delighted with it. We want to give our old laptop, an Inspiron 1150, to another member of the family but before we do we want to wipe it clean of all personal data. What is the safest way to do this?

I recently bought a copy of your magazine for the first time. It's interesting and really informative – you've gained another reader.
Malcolm Nicholson

Nick says...
Follow this link to read about ways to purge your PC of private data: http://bit.ly/b8Jdm7. Just make sure you transfer all the files you want to keep to your new PC or save them to an external hard drive first. We're pleased you like the mag.

WASTE OF SPACE

I agree with Tim Cutler's letter in issue 65 – there's too much wasted space showing pictures of pretty girls. You've done even better in this issue on page 27 with a one-and-three-quarter-page spread. How long before we have a full centre-fold pull out? If I wanted pictures of pretty girls, I would reach a little higher when buying the magazine. "Good design practice" or padding?

On a slightly different note, I find it quite ironic that, in the article on BT Vision on page 31, you mention that the BT Vision interface "has recently moved over to a white text on a pastel blue look. Oddly, this makes the interface more difficult to see and navigate." Having decided to criticise BT on its choice of colours, you then publish the article in the magazine in white text on a pastel blue background. I also find this choice of colours very difficult to read. How could you criticise BT and then do the same thing yourselves?
Trevor Thomas

Star letter of the month

KEEP IT BRITISH!

I refer to issue 65 page 8. I'm afraid I must object to the picture of the young man wearing a typical English flat cap but holding a fistful of US dollars. Don't you know that the coin of the realm in this country is the good old British pound? Why is this young man not clasping a fistful of fivers instead of dollar bills? Please, please, please do not Americanise our favourite magazine.
Greg Maschak

Matt says...
I'm afraid it's not as simple as case of Americanisation. Reproducing images of British bank notes is a complicated affair that requires written permission and approval directly from the Bank of England. This is a legal requirement under section 18(1) of the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981. Sometimes the length of time it can take to be granted this permission means that we need to find alternative solutions to make the same point within the limitations of our print schedule. In this particular case the fact that the notes were not UK sterling was discussed but the decision was made that the concept still made sense regardless of the currency. You can read more about reproducing banknotes here: http://bit.ly/aPwFwa.

WIN £50 OF SOFTWARE!

Our letter of the month wins the Encyclopaedia Britannica 2011 Ultimate Edition worth £40.84, and Enlightenus 2 Collector's Edition worth £10.20. Both titles are available from software stockists, or from www.focusmm.co.uk.

Matt says...
Thank you for your feedback, Trevor. Female models have been a feature of our covers for years, including during our previous incarnations as *Windows Vista Magazine* and *Windows XP Magazine*. Using an image from the cover shoot on the opening spread of the main feature is a clear way of signposting it, which is important since it's probably one of the main reasons you picked up the magazine. Besides this, as we said in our response to Tim, it's standard practice to introduce a big feature in a magazine with a large image (regardless of whether there's a female model in it or not) and a smaller word count to ease readers in – being greeted with a wall of text is just too off-putting. I can also assure you that a great deal of consideration is taken to make sure that the wardrobe of the models is appropriate to our audience and you'll never see our models dressed in a way you'll see in magazines on higher shelves.

With regards to your problems concerning the choice of our colours in the feature, I'm afraid I have to disagree with your definition of pastel blue. The blue in question is a solid mix of 70 per cent cyan and 30 per cent magenta. This, coupled with the large serif font size we use, should mean that the text is legible. If we had used a tint of that colour allowing more white to show through I could agree with your assessment. Please be assured that readability is always a consideration and when a tint is used it is always with black text.

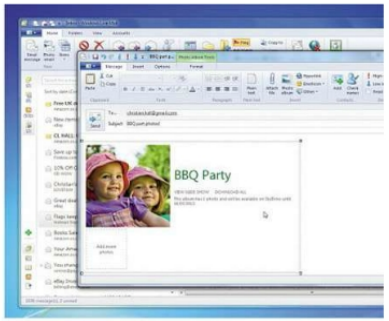
PHONE SCAM

Further to your recent letters regarding phone scams, I too have received some cold calls from a company purporting to represent Microsoft. On the last occasion, with some trepidation, I allowed them to take control of my PC during which time they showed me a list of errors appearing in the event viewer (which I already knew about). After a long telephone conversation they informed me that they could repair all these problems and give me a free firewall if I agreed to a £80 per year contract otherwise my PC could die on me. Needless to say I logged off.
Peter Baker

Adam says...
Sadly, this is a scam that a lot of our readers are experiencing. Microsoft will never call you out of the blue and it has no way of knowing whether your PC has problems. If you receive a call like this you should just hang up and certainly don't hand over any credit card details or let them take control of your computer.

CORRECTION!

On the Windows Insider page in issue 65, you say to type 'pcr.exe' into the search box, but I tried several times to start Problem Steps Recorder this way but to no avail. Then the grey cells clicked in and I replaced the 'c' with an 's', typing in 'psr.exe' instead. Bingo! It worked.
Gerald Checketts



Windows Live Mail provides a much richer experience than a webmail account

Nick says...
Good spot, Gerald. You're right and apologies for the error.

POOR ATTITUDE

I'm very disappointed with your response to Jack Roberts in issue 63 who complained about Windows Live Mail. He gave you specific itemised complaints and you totally ignored these by saying he's just used to how things were. Your credibility stinks with such a couldn't-care-less attitude. Windows Live is useless and I will never use it either.
Ray Daniels

Adam says...
We're sorry you feel this way, Ray. Jack was clearly voicing an opinion, not providing a long list of problems he wanted fixing, hence my reply that he may grow to like Windows Live Mail the more he got used to it. We have a Windows Live Mail tutorial on page 50, if you're willing to give it another chance and discover its many benefits. ■

WE ALSO HEARD FROM

William Charnley (We're glad Zinio was able to resolve your issue) Mike Turner (Thanks for your suggestion, we'll bear it in mind) Jack Anderson (You're welcome – always pleased to help where we can)

Follow us on twitter

twitter.com/windowsmag

I love the look of some of the new Windows hardware coming out of CES now, especially the beautiful Lenovo all-in-one
Posted on 10 January

"Every Windows 7 PC ever made will be ready for Windows 8 on day one" so says Steve Ballmer, handy news for those wanting to upgrade
Posted on 11 January

This is what happens when you get everyone on the internet to remake the Star Wars movie http://bit.ly/8XBcxz. Terrible or inspiring?
Posted on 25 January

Ask Microsoft

We give you direct access to...

Ian Moulster
Windows team, Microsoft
Ian has worked in the IT industry for over 20 years. He has been at Microsoft for the past seven years working as a product manager across various technologies, including Windows, Internet Explorer and many others.

Reader, Gordon McKay...
"Where would you recommend keeping all my installed apps to make my PC easier to use?"

Ian Moulster replies...
"You have a few options when you install an application on Windows but let's start with the one that's been around in Windows for many years – a shortcut on the desktop. Many applications will provide a shortcut automatically (the more polite ones will ask you first!) and it certainly does make things easy – just double-click on the icon on your desktop to launch it. But while this is all well and good if you only have a couple of apps, once you start installing more than a handful it becomes less convenient, as it gets difficult to find what you want among the clutter. Third-party solutions such as Fences from Stardock (www.stardock.com/products/fences/) can help with this by allowing you to group icons on your desktop and restore order.

There are other options too. For example, if you're using Windows 7 you can pin the application to your taskbar by dragging the icon from your desktop to the taskbar. This not only makes it easy to find – and easy to launch with just one click – but also many apps support jump-lists. Right-click on the icon to get a list of commonly performed tasks such as accessing recent documents or files. If your taskbar gets too crowded you can drag the icon to the Start button instead. It will now appear on the list of applications that appears when you press the Start button, meaning once again it's easy to find.

But perhaps the simplest answer is not to have a shortcut at all. Just search for an app using the excellent search capabilities of Windows 7. Press 'Start', start typing the application's name and, as soon as it appears, press [Enter] to launch it."

THE WINDOWS REVOLUTION

With Microsoft's much-anticipated release of Windows 8 fast approaching, we take a closer look at the new operating system's biggest and best changes

That time is almost upon us once again, when a new Microsoft Windows operating system is released that looks set to change the way we use our computers. The step up from Windows XP to Windows Vista brought a huge range of improvements and new features and we've come to wonder how we ever managed without them before. Windows 7 built upon these features, tweaking and perfecting them, while adding new ones, to create the best version of Windows so far.

So what does Windows 8 have in store? Especially for those of us who've just got Windows 7 and are perfectly happy with it? While it might seem at first glance that Windows 8 is simply a new look with a few changes under the bonnet, the reality is that this OS represents Microsoft's boldest attempt to revolutionise the way we use our computers.

In many ways, our computing habits have evolved a lot in the past couple of years and, in several respects, Windows 8 is a reaction to these changes. Recent studies have shown that we are increasingly using mobile phones to read and send emails, while the number of us reading our emails in more traditional ways – on our computers – is falling slightly.

We're now used to having access to our emails, favourite websites, even TV programmes and games while out and about, and Microsoft has realised this. Windows 8 represents a whole new approach by Microsoft. It brings everything we love about Windows away from our desks and tables, into a world where we're free to connect to the internet, use applications and work with Windows from anywhere. This bold vision of how Windows is going to connect us all, all of the time, requires an equally bold approach. This is where the really exciting innovations of Windows 8 come in.

Imagine a Windows that runs just as smoothly on a paper-thin tablet PC as it does on a full sized desktop PC. Imagine a Windows that starts up almost instantly, with all your previous programs up and running just as you left them. Imagine a Windows that you can take with you, accessing your emails, documents and personal files from anywhere in the world. This is the potential of Windows 8, and when it launches it will usher in a whole new – and very exciting – era for our computer. Let us show you some of the best features you might not have heard about...

METRO INTERFACE

Probably the most exciting new feature in Windows 8 is the great-looking and easy-to-use touch-friendly Metro interface

There are tweaks and improvements running throughout Windows 8, but the biggest change – and the one that has the most potential to change the way we interact with our PCs – is the new Metro interface. If you've got a Windows Phone 7 smartphone then you'll probably recognise elements of the interface – the large tiles that represent games and apps and the simple and elegant design, in particular. The similarities between Windows 8's Metro interface and the menus of Windows Phone 7 isn't a coincidence – it's part of Microsoft's goal to unify our desktop, mobile and smartphone experience all through Windows 8.

Since the launch of Windows 7, small, portable and touchscreen-enabled tablet PCs have become incredibly popular. While at the time Windows 7 was the most touchscreen-friendly version of Windows ever released, it was more suited to larger touchscreen monitors, rather than the smaller screens of tablet PCs. However, this is all set to change with Windows 8 and its fantastic Metro interface. Designed from the ground up to be quick and easy to use on any touchscreen, no matter what the size, Windows 8 isn't just going to enter the tablet market, it's going to revolutionise it.

So how will Windows 8 achieve this? What will make it stand out in the increasingly crowded tablet market? Firstly, the Metro interface brings the unique Live Tiles. These tiles represent installed apps in Windows 8. Not only are they large enough to easily read and select on a touchscreen, but they can also be updated instantly by the app to give you extra information. So the Outlook app live tile will display the number of unread emails you have in your inbox, and the Weather app's live tile will change to reflect the current weather. This means you get an instant overview of all of your apps without having to open each app and check for yourself.

With the Metro interface it is incredibly easy to rearrange the tiles so that your favourite apps are right at your fingertips.

But what will really set Windows 8 apart is that behind this fantastic, simple design that's perfect for tablet PCs, lies the full power of a Windows operating system. Steven Sinofsky, president of Microsoft's Windows Division, explained what the company's aims are for Windows 8: "We envision an operating system that scales from small form factor keyboard-less tablets all the way up to the high end. It's an incredibly bold vision and one we're executing on.

"And the reason we made this bold bet saying 'let's build on Windows' is that we looked around and we don't see these apps being replaced by something else."

Microsoft's vision of Windows 8 running on all kinds of devices is an exciting one, and the Metro interface will play a crucial role in making this a reality.

DESKTOP If you're looking to get straight to the Windows 8 desktop for a more familiar environment, click the 'Desktop' tile to display it.

USER TILE This is where the current user is displayed. Clicking the user name opens up a list of various options. 'Change user tile' opens up the user account options, where you can add a photo to your account and change your password. 'Lock' brings up the Lock screen on your PC or tablet, 'Log off' logs off the current user and 'Add user' enables you to create a new user account.

WEBSITES It's not just apps that you can access here – you can also pin your favourite websites to the Start screen for quick and easy access.

APPS From the Start screen of the Metro interface you can quickly access apps by clicking on their tiles. Common Windows elements such as Internet Explorer, Control Panel and Windows Explorer are also present as tiles.

MORE APPS When installing more apps, you don't have to worry about running out of space in the Metro interface. Simply swipe your finger (or press and hold down the left mouse button) from right to left to scroll through all of your installed apps.

Jargon buster!

Javascript
Javascript is a language used by websites to display dynamic and complex items, such as interactive games and media. It's also used by apps such as PDF documents and desktop gadgets.

Pin
The idea of 'pinning' programs and shortcuts has been in Windows for a while. You can pin programs to the taskbar or Start menu to make them quickly accessible. Windows 8 allows you to pin almost anything to the Metro Start screen.

FASTER PERFORMANCE

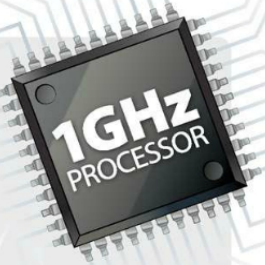
Microsoft has been serious about making Windows 8 the fastest operating system there is. Memory usage has been minimised, boot times reduced and built-in support for USB 3.0 and Hyper-V technology helps Windows 8 take advantage of the next wave of super-fast technologies.

THREE MILLION DOWNLOADS...

Since its release in September 2011 the Windows 8 Developer Preview – which lets you download and try out Windows 8 for free – has been incredibly popular, with over three million downloads. While the Windows 8 Developer Preview is far from the finished product, it offers a great glimpse of what's to come.

INTERNET EXPLORER POWER

Windows 8 is so light that its minimum specifications are incredibly low, so even older, low powered PCs can benefit from the new operating system. As long as they have a 1GHz processor, 1GB of RAM (2GB for 64-bit PCs), 16GB of disk space (32GB for 64-bit) and DirectX 9 graphics with WDDM 1.0 they'll be able to run it.



The internet and internet-enabled apps are going to be a huge part of Windows 8, so Microsoft has taken a lot of time to ensure that Internet Explorer pulls its weight. Thanks to an advanced Javascript engine and hardware acceleration, IE can use your PC's processing power to make websites load faster than ever before.

THE NEW DESKTOP

While a lot of attention is being directed at the Metro interface, the desktop has also seen a lot of changes

The Windows desktop has been an essential part of Microsoft's operating system right from the very start. At first it was a place to display icons and shortcuts to your favourite programs, but over the years it has evolved with every new Windows iteration to become an incredibly useful and important part of the system.

At first glance it might not seem like too much has changed since Windows 7. But in just a few minutes of using Windows 8's new desktop you'll soon discover just how much is new.

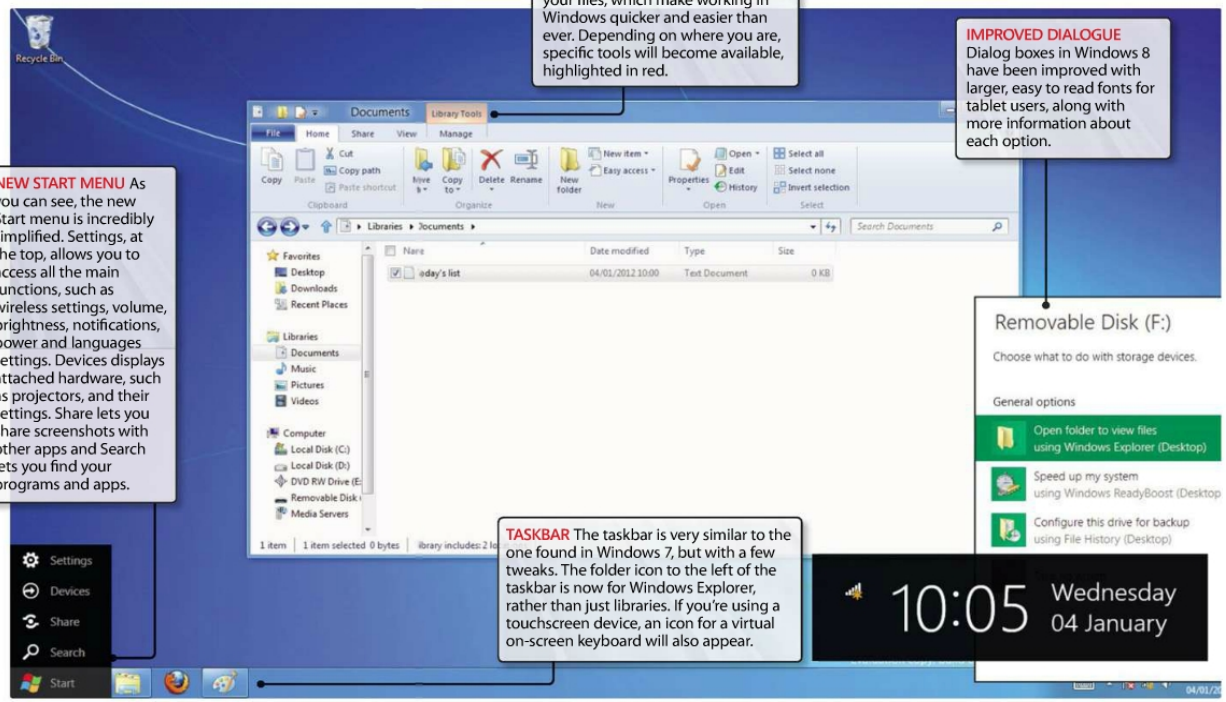
While the Metro interface is excellent for calling up apps, sites and media quickly and easily, if you want to complete more complex tasks, such as word processing or browsing folders, then you'll want to load up the Windows 8 desktop. Unlike earlier versions of Windows, the desktop isn't the first thing you see after you've logged on. Instead it's the Metro user interface. To go to the desktop, either click the 'Desktop' tile or press the 'Windows' key on your keyboard.

The first change you'll notice is also the biggest. The Start menu, a Windows stalwart since Windows 95, is no more. Rather than having the familiar list of programs and shortcuts of the old Start menu, Windows 8 has a simplified menu that contains just a few options: Settings, Devices, Share and Search.

To find and run programs without the old Start menu hold down the 'Windows' key on your keyboard, and press [F] to open up Search. Click 'Apps' and you'll be left with an alphabetically sorted list of installed apps and applications – just click one to launch it, or right-click one and select 'Pin' to add it to the Metro screen for easy access later.

Another new feature is the inclusion of the Ribbon interface in Windows Explorer when you're browsing files and folders on your PC. If you've used Microsoft Office 2007 or 2010, or used Paint in Windows 7, then you'll recognise Ribbon. The Ribbon interface is context-sensitive, which means it displays different sections and options according to what you're doing, making it even easier to work with files and folders. For example, if you click a program's executional file to launch the program, you'll see an Application section appear on the Ribbon, providing you with options to pin the file to the taskbar, run it as an Administrator, or another user, or troubleshoot "compatibility issues" if it won't run.

Another great new addition to Windows Explorer is the Quick Access Toolbar. This gives you easy access to options like New Folder, Minimise, Undo and more. It's customisable, too – click the arrow to the right of the default buttons, in the Explorer window caption bar, and choose the options you need. And you can add any other Ribbon option on the Quick Access Toolbar by right-clicking it and selecting 'Add to Quick Access Toolbar'.



Jargon buster!

▶ Tile
The Metro interface found in both Windows 8 and Windows Phone 7 consists of big tiles that represent applications. They're large enough to easily select using a touchscreen, and they're useful too. Some tiles can include information about their program, such as the number of unread emails you have in your inbox.

▶ Executional file
Most commonly known as a .exe file, an executional file contains the program ready to run with just a double click. For example, Microsoft Word 2010's executional file is word.exe.

Step-by-step | Open apps quickly

1 Open your favourite program
When you have a number of applications installed on your computer it might take a while to find your favourites, especially if you're using a keyboard and mouse, rather than touchscreen. To make it quick and easy, first open up your favourite program from the Windows 8 desktop.

2 Pin the program
While your favourite program is open, right-click its taskbar button and select 'Pin this program to Taskbar'. Next, close the program and drag and drop the taskbar icon all the way to the left – as far as it will go – then press the 'Windows' key again to return to the Metro interface.

3 Use the shortcut
Now hold down the 'Windows' button and press [1] on your keyboard. The Windows 8 desktop will appear and your chosen program will launch. Pressing [2] will launch the second icon along, which by default is Internet Explorer, and hitting [3] will launch the next one along.

WINDOWS 8 ON A TABLET

Eight reasons why you'll want Windows 8 on your portable PC

One of the biggest changes to the way we use our computers has been brought about by the success of tablet PCs. These slimline machines let us access our emails, browse the web, play games and work on apps, quickly and easily. They've changed our expectations of what our PCs can do and how they should perform.

With a tablet, it's no longer acceptable to wait while the operating system loads up – they should be able to go in and out of hibernation instantly. Battery life should also be far longer than what we've let laptops get away with in the past.

For all its successes, Windows 7 wasn't built from the ground up for tablet PCs. But with Windows 8 Microsoft has kept tablet PCs at the forefront, resulting in an OS that's a perfect fit for tablets. There are two main tablet operating systems – Apple's iOS, which is found on the iPad, and Google's Android. Both have their disadvantages, ones that Windows 8 can easily overcome, making it the go-to operating system for tablet PCs in the future. We look at eight of the best reasons to have Windows 8 running on your tablet PC.

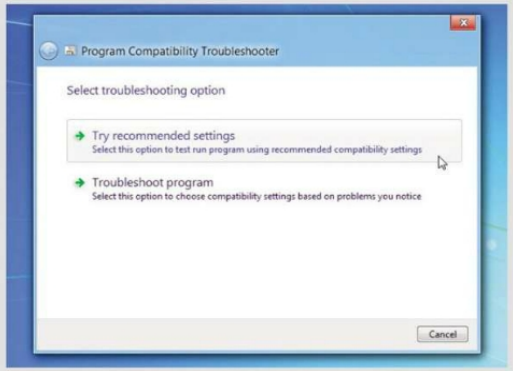
PERFECT MATCH The Metro interface is ideal for use on tablets

Interface

Windows 8's biggest advantage for tablet owners is its brand new Metro interface, which is perfectly suited to the touchscreen interface of tablet PCs. Like a supercharged version of the Windows Phone 7 interface, Metro makes using Windows 8 on a tablet a pleasure. It's quick, responsive and clear. But most importantly of all, it's easy to use. All of your apps, games, favourite websites and settings for your PC can be quickly and easily accessed via the Metro interface. The large tiles aren't just easy to select with your fingers, many applications will support live updating of the tiles to give you even more information at your fingertips. The large text of the Metro interface makes it easy to read on smaller screens as well.

It's customisable too, so you can move tiles about to give you quick access to your favourites. You can also choose the size and shape (between squares and rectangles) of the tiles. With a bit of simple tweaking you'll soon have the Windows 8 Metro interface looking and working just how you want it to.

Apps will also be able to work together in the Metro interface, so if you search for a word in Bing, you can swipe in another app to have the search term automatically move over to the new app. There's a huge potential for the new Metro interface on tablet PCs and it could prove to be Windows 8's greatest triumph.



BACKWARDS COMPATIBLE Most old Windows programs can be used on Windows 8

Compatibility

Apple's strong hold on what can and can't be used on iOS limits its potential, whereas Windows 8 carries backwards compatibility for existing Windows programs. While the Metro interface is excellent for launching tablet-specific apps in Windows 8, there is still a fully functioning version of Windows running underneath. This means most of your favourite programs from previous versions of Windows will work with Windows 8. They're not optimised for the touchscreens of tablets, but it gives Windows 8 users a huge advantage over iPad owners, who have to wait for specially designed iOS versions of programs to be created – and then approved by Apple.

With Windows 8 you don't need to wait for a tablet-specific version of your program or game to be released – as long as it worked in Windows, and your tablet is powerful enough to handle it, you'll be able to use it in Windows 8, giving you a huge selection of existing software. Even old programs and games from Windows 95 and Windows 98 can be used thanks to Windows 8's fantastic compatibility mode.

ONE LOOK FITS ALL All Windows 8 devices will feature the same interface

Unified experience

One of the best reasons to get Windows 8 on your tablet PC is the potential for a unified experience between your mobile phone, tablet PC and desktop PCs. Never before has a user experience been spread over so many types of devices. There won't be any compromises on Windows features either. If your tablet is powerful enough then you'll get all the features and tools you'd expect from a desktop version of Windows 8 – on a device small enough to fit in your bag!

NOTHING MALICIOUS Security and uneven updates shouldn't be a problem

Security

Because Google takes a hands-off approach to vetting what goes into the Android Market there have been a number of incidents where apps containing malicious viruses have been included. Microsoft is taking a more security-conscious approach to what goes up on the Windows Store, aiming to ensure no apps are infected. Windows 8 will also be compatible with the powerful and well-known anti-virus programs available for previous versions of Windows.

APPS GALORE Buy Windows apps from the Windows Store

Windows Store

Want a place where you can easily find, buy and download apps for your tablet? Then the brand new Windows Store is the place to visit. It has been designed from the ground up to make it as quick and easy as possible to discover and buy applications specifically designed for Windows 8. The simple, yet elegant, interface makes it easy to search for specific apps or browse by categories such as Games or Music.

From the first page of the Windows Store you'll be directed to view the latest, most popular and fastest rising apps. Windows Store will also remember what apps you've looked at and downloaded, giving you personalised app recommendations. The Windows Store will have its catalogue indexed by search engines, so you can use Bing or Google to find apps as well. Getting apps on your tablet has never been easier.

WIDE CHOICE There will be lots of Windows 8 tablets available

Top manufacturers

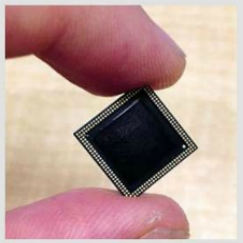
When Windows 8 tablets appear, you can be certain the best manufacturers in the world will be building them, resulting in the best tablet PCs money can buy. Unlike with the Apple iPad 2, which is only made and designed by Apple, this means there will be plenty of choice for a Windows 8 tablet. When Windows 8 was shown at the Build conference in 2011, a Samsung Windows 8 tablet was shown off and it looked fantastic. In October 2011 HP also confirmed it will be making Windows 8 tablets.

Additionally, as reported in our hardware news section on page 86, Nokia is rumoured to be launching a Windows 8 tablet in summer this year and it sounds like Windows users have much to be excited about, with Nokia CEO Stephen Elop saying that the company is considering how to take on the might of the iPad. "There's a new tablet opportunity coming… Unquestionably, that will change the dynamics [of the tablet market]."

BETTER BROWSING Internet Explorer 10 will take web browsing to another level

Internet Explorer 10

When IE 10 releases it will only be available for Windows 7 and Windows 8. Microsoft's vision of the internet means you'll need the latest software and hardware to experience the next generation of the web. It'll work seamlessly with Windows 8's Metro interface, making it the fastest and easiest-to-use web browser for tablet PCs. If you want to experience Microsoft's vision of a better internet, make sure you have Windows 8 installed on your tablet.



FLEXIBLE FRIEND Windows 8 can run on mobile-computing-specific processors

A whole host of processors

Windows 8 tablets will be able to run on ARM, Intel and AMD processors, the possibilities of which are fantastic. ARM processors are specially designed for mobile computers such as tablets, offering high processing power with low power consumption – which means you can do complex tasks without draining the battery. Meanwhile, Intel and AMD support means you can use Windows 8 on desktop and laptop PCs and, in the future, even powerful tablets. ■

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Explore

WINDOWS TIPS ▶ INTERNET ADVICE ▶ YOUR DISC SOFTWARE

Welcome

With finances tight, especially as you pay off the last of those Christmas bills, we help you to save and organise your money. From collating your receipts to cutting the cost of your mobile bill, we show you how to reduce your outgoings as well as keep track of them.

Once you're done getting your finances in order, turn your attention to other areas of your life by learning how to protect your home and manage your Hotmail account more effectively. Then for something a little more fun, grab PowerDirector 8 Deluxe off this issue's disc and get editing your videos!

Adam Ifans Editor-in-Chief
adam.ifans@futurenet.com

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Your guide Rachael D'Cruze says...

"Organising your receipts is child's play with OneReceipt's easy-to-use categorising and tagging system, and its filter search function makes it easy to find things, too."

Turn to page 64 for more

Our promise to you...

Get more from Windows, software and all your favourite sites

Packed with informative tutorials

Every issue, we guarantee to pack the magazine with great tutorials teaching you all the best things you can do with your PC. Each article features step-by-step instructions to make learning new skills fast and enjoyable.

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Use our full software to try new things

Our exclusive industry access enables us to pack your free disc with full commercial software. From speed-up and security software to superb photo apps, there's always something new to try on your PC.

Your free disc...

This issue's free disc is packed with full software, essential toolkits, apps and resources to help you get the most from your computer.

Look out for the badge (below) pointing to key files for the article you're reading.

On your disc

Install the free **Windows Live Essentials suite** from the Resources section.

Learn how to...

Pay council tax online

Your guide Rhian Drinkwater says...

"Take some of the pain out of paying your monthly bill by doing it without leaving your sofa."

At a glance...

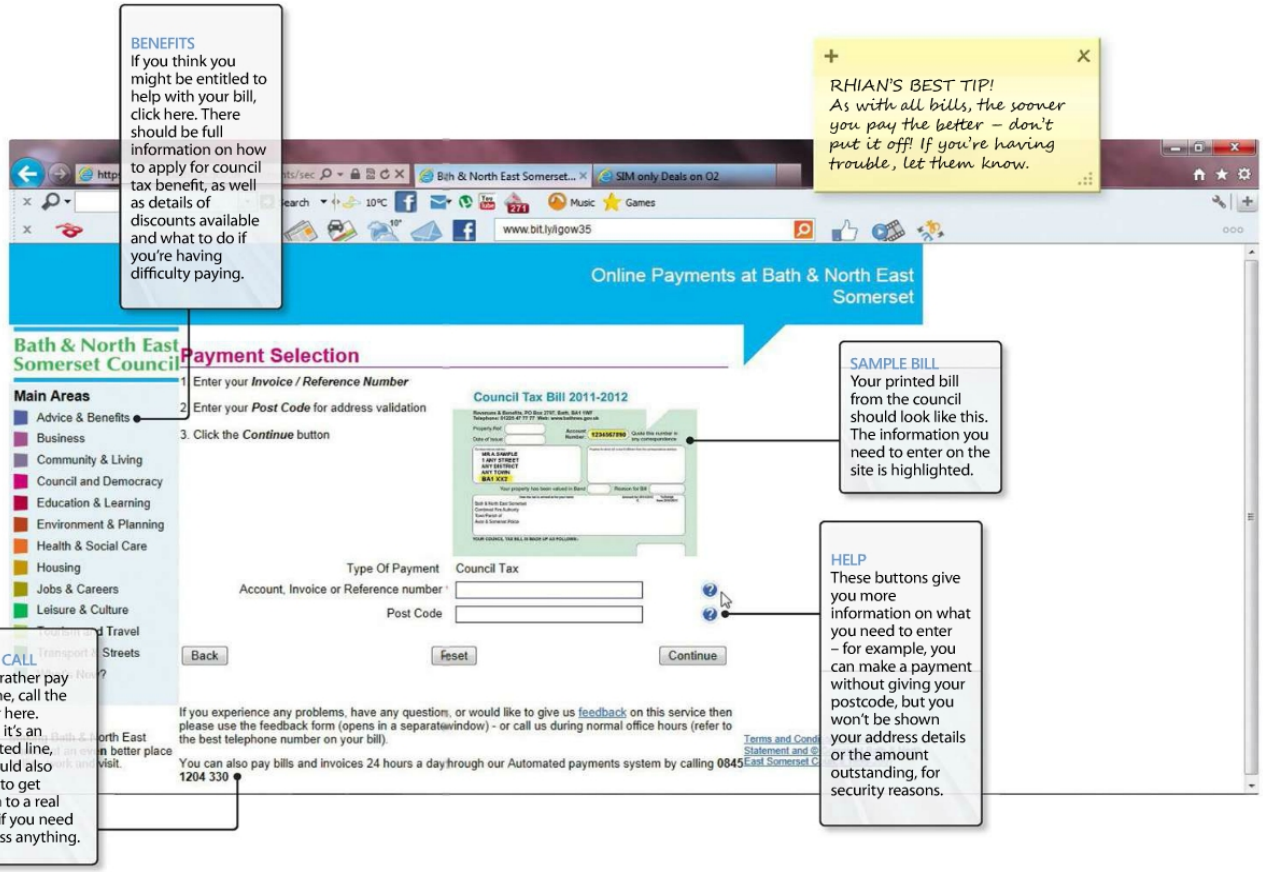
SKILL LEVEL
- ▶ Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN
- ▶ 15 minutes

SUITABLE FOR
- ▶ Windows 7
- ▶ Windows Vista
- ▶ Windows XP

There's nothing nice about paying council tax. It's generally one of the larger monthly bills and certainly not one you can ignore either, since you can be sent to prison for non-payment. But though handing over your money might not be pleasant, it can at least be easy. Don't worry about posting off cheques every month or trekking to the council offices with cash in your lunch hour – just pay online and have it all sorted in the time it takes to finish your coffee. And while you're at it, why not set up a direct debit so you don't have to worry about it again next month?

I'll take you through the basic steps involved in paying your bill online. The exact screens you see will obviously vary depending on your council and how its website is set out, but you should get a good idea of the simple process involved.



Jargon buster!

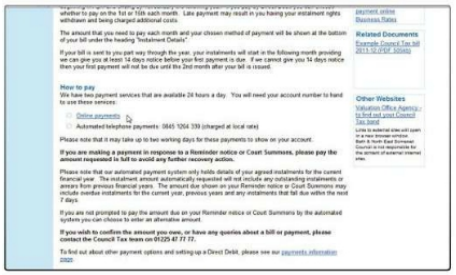
▶ **Direct debit**
A way of allowing someone to take a regular amount from your bank account without needing to authorise it every time. If the amount varies, you'll be notified in advance, and if any errors are made by the debiting party then you're entitled to an immediate refund.

▶ **PDF**
Stands for Portable Document Format. A file that can be read by anyone who has the free Adobe Reader software on their computer. You can read PDFs just like a page in a book. The high resolution means it doesn't strain your eyes and the relatively small file size makes it popular on the internet because it's quick to download.

Step-by-step | Pay your council tax

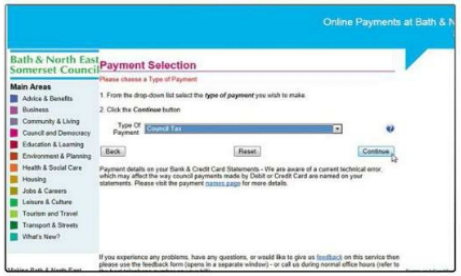
1 Find the page

Obviously the council (and website) you pay your money to will vary depending on where you live, so first head to http://bit.ly/igow35 and type in your postcode. You should be given a link to your local council's site. With any luck you'll be taken directly to the council tax payment page, but this doesn't always work. If it hasn't, just go to the home page and look for the council tax link.



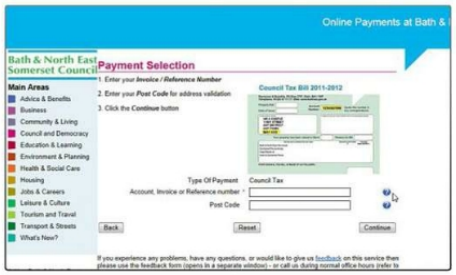
2 Online payment

Once you're on the main council tax page, scroll down until you find a link to making online payments for your tax. Here's mine, on the website of Bath & North East Somerset Council. Before you click, make sure you've got your latest bill to hand, as you'll need the account number and possibly other details from there to log in and make a payment.



3 Paying my tax

Now I'm in the payment section of the website, I just need to remind the site what type of payment I'm making (council tax) by selecting it from the drop-down menu. You can also make other payments to your council from here if you wish, such as for parking fines or recycling boxes. Once the correct payment type is selected, click on 'Continue'.



4 Enter your details

Exactly what you see here will probably vary by council, but you're likely to be asked for your identifying details – the reference from your council tax bill and your postcode. Enter these and click 'Continue' again. If you're unsure about anything, click on the '?' to the right of the fields. Here, a sample image of my bill shows where to find the relevant information.

5 Confirm details

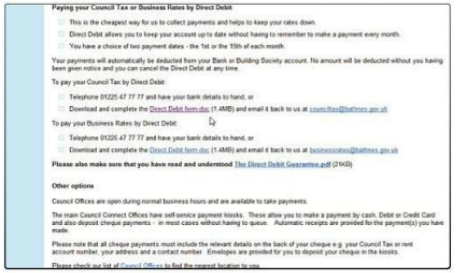
The next screen will bring up your details and show your usual payment amount. You can change the amount if you want, but generally you'll want to pay what they're asking for! If you're in arrears though, you may have been billed a different amount – enter that here. Double check that all the details are correct and confirm the amount you want to pay, then click on 'Continue'.

6 Card sharp

Now it's time to choose a payment type. As you're paying online, of course, this means paying by card. In common with a lot of government sites, it's free to pay your bill by debit card, but there's likely to be a fee for paying by credit card. This could either be a fixed amount or a percentage of what you're paying. Again, if you've got queries, click on the '?' buttons at the side.

7 Confirm and pay

You'll now get a summary of your payment for you to confirm, detailing the account you're paying to, and how much. Press 'Continue' again and you'll be asked for your card information. Just fill this in as you would with any other online purchase and click 'Continue'. You should get a confirmation screen and a receipt you can print out, and your payment is made.



8 Month by month

Of course, the easiest and most reliable way to pay any regular bill is by direct debit – and gone are the days that you need to sign and post off bits of paper. Go back to the original council tax screen on your council website, and search for a link to paying by direct debit. You should be able to download a form (and, of course, the guarantee to keep for your records).

9 Form filling

After clicking on the link, you should automatically download a form similar to that seen here. It will either open as a Word document or a PDF (my council supplies them as Word files). Fill in all the information asked for, then save it as a new file and email back to the council address provided. Do take a few moments to double check everything is correct first, though.

10 All paid up

Well done – that's your council tax paid for another month and hopefully sorted for the year ahead so you never miss a payment. Council tax is normally split over 10 monthly payments (with February and March bill-free), but if 12 smaller payments would suit your budget better, give your council a ring and they should be able to change it for you. ■

Windows The Official Magazine

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Make your laptop easier to use

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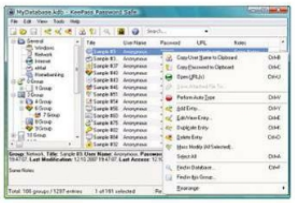

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Get better performance from your computer with our essential **Speed-up Toolkit**

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Learn how to...

Speed up Windows boot times with Startup Delayer

Your guide Richard Cobbett says...

"However powerful your PC is, you will eventually see your start-up speed slow to a crawl. This is a great way to claw back some performance."

At a glance...

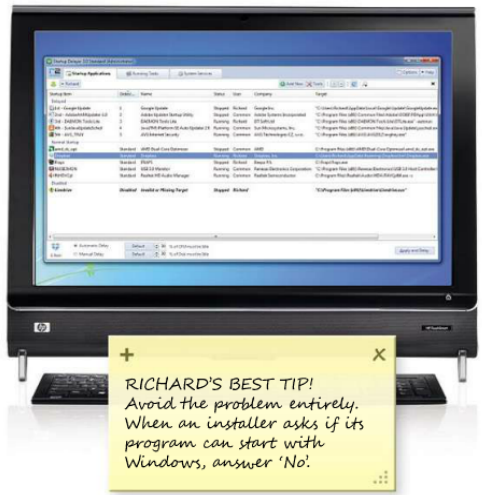
SKILL LEVEL
- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN
- 15 hour

SUITABLE FOR
- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

Ideally, programs would know their place. They'd sit on your desktop, silent and unobtrusive until you called on them. Instead, more and more of them now try to run every single time you load Windows, slowing your PC to a halt regardless of whether you want to check for their updates, log into your games service, or whatever else it is they do.

The more software you have installed, the more you'll notice the problem – to the extent that it can be whole minutes between your desktop appearing and being able to do anything with it. Luckily, there are ways to cut through all this. First, we'll do a little spring cleaning. Next, you'll find out how a tool called Startup Delayer can space out the applications you do want to have automatically loaded, and let Windows handle them quickly, efficiently and behind the scenes.



Step-by-step Speed up Windows boot times

1 Check Your list

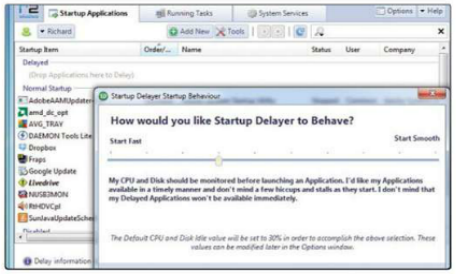
Boot up your PC and, without loading anything, click the arrow icon in the Taskbar to see which programs load automatically. Right-click each one to bring up a menu that should help explain what they are. Common apps include your graphics card Control Panel, the Java installer, software update checkers and antivirus. But every PC will be different.

2 Revoke access

Some, such as antivirus software and Dropbox, need to be loaded and always running, and can be left as they are. Other apps, such as Steam, can simply be loaded when you need them. Right-click each of these and look for an option along the lines of 'Run when Windows starts'. If you don't see one, open it and look in its Preferences/Options menu instead.

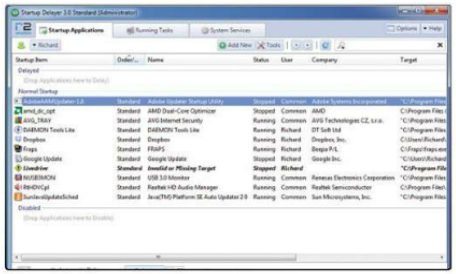
3 Download Startup Delayer

Open your web browser and visit www.r2.com.au to download Startup Delayer. Run the setup file, letting it make a System Restore Point just to be on the safe side, and let it run. This will take a few seconds to scan your PC for applications, and give you the option to load the help file. You can safely skip this part, at least for now.



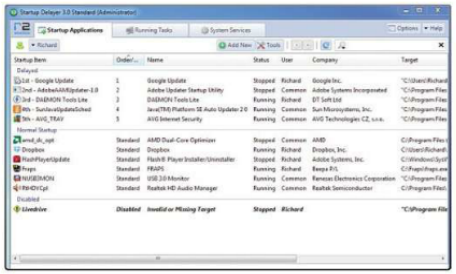
4 Speed vs performance

Your first, and most important choice is to tell Startup Delayer your priorities. This is based on a sliding scale that goes from loading your applications as fast as possible (all the way to the left) to only loading the next one when your PC is effectively sitting idle. As a starting point, we recommend going with the third or fourth notch from the left.



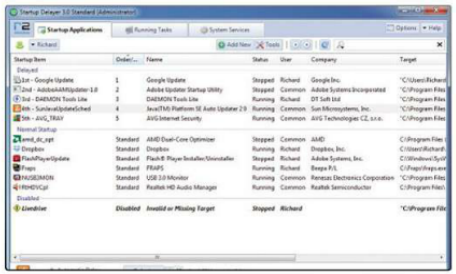
5 Delayed launch

By default, all of your existing software is classed as 'Normal Startup', which are things that Delayer loads as soon as possible. Essential software, such as antivirus, should remain here. Most software should be set as 'Delayed', meaning they are forced to wait until your PC is sitting idle. You can also drag apps into 'Disabled' if you can't prevent them automatically loading up.



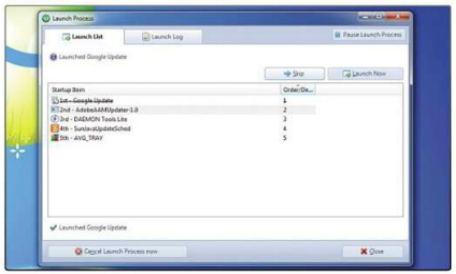
6 The loading order

Once dragged into the 'Delayed' list, you will see that each application is numbered. This is the order that Startup Delayer will load them, as and when it finds a quiet moment. To reorder them, simply select one you wish to move, click on it, and drag it into its new position. Applications in the 'Normal' list don't have a number, all being loaded at once.



7 Starting The clock

If necessary, you can take charge of individual applications by selecting them, then assigning either an automatic (based on how hard your processor/hard drive is working) or timed delay. Both of these options are listed at the bottom of the screen. You can also hold [Shift] or [CTRL] to select and delay multiple applications at once.



8 Reboot and rejoice

Restart your PC and see the difference. The more applications you had running, a greater improvement you'll see, but any machine should feel noticeably faster. If you want to see what Startup Delayer is doing, right-click its icon in the Taskbar and select 'Show Startup Process' to bring up its list. You'll have to be quick though – it's no slouch! ■

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Step-by-step | The Lowepro Messenger Factor Bag

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Learn how to...

Get organised with Hotmail

Your guide Nick Peers says...

"Discover how to use Hotmail to efficiently and safely manage your email and privacy."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL
- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

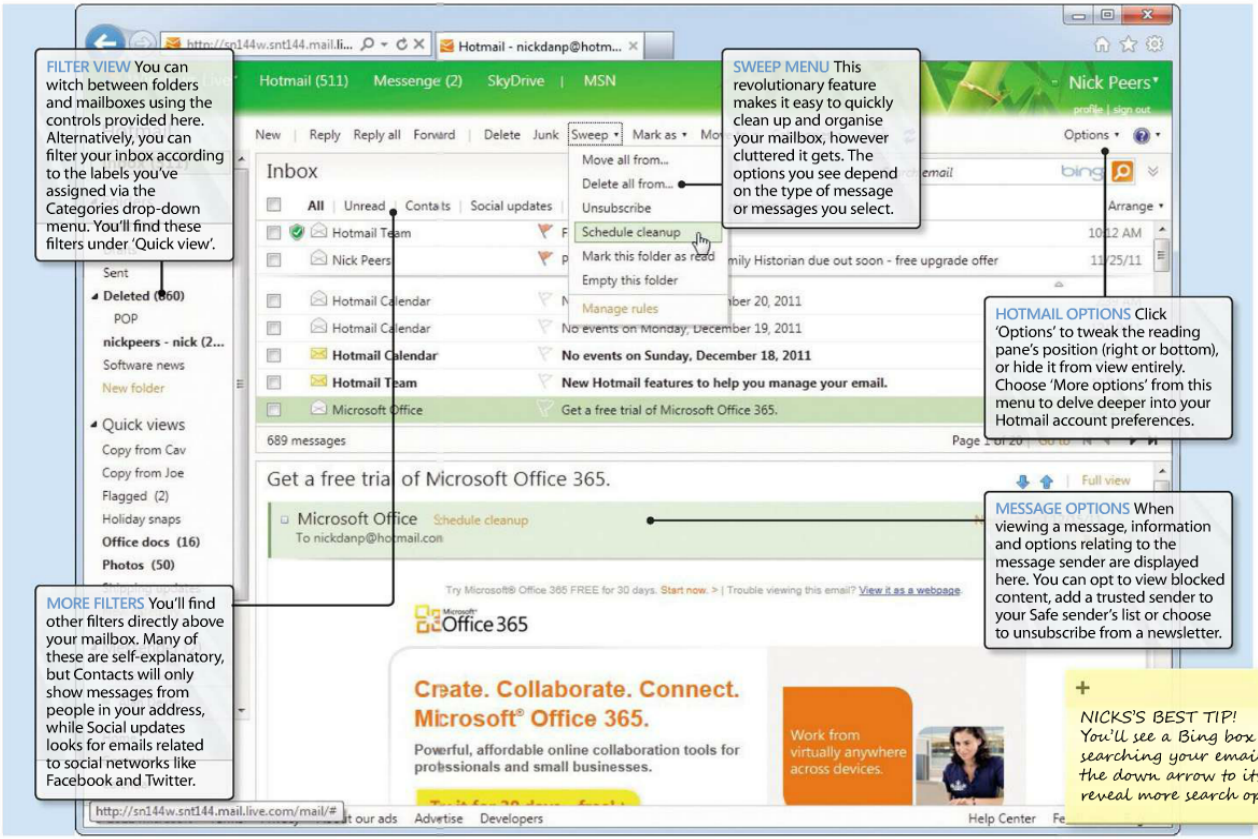
TIME TAKEN
- 15 minutes

SUITABLE FOR
- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

Have you taken a look at Windows Live Hotmail lately? The free web-based email service has been transformed in recent years and now offers a fast, reliable way of accessing not just your Hotmail account, but all of your email accounts from your web browser.

Thanks to technologies like SmartScreen, Hotmail effectively blocks virtually all junk mail from your inbox, and with new tools including categories, flagging, newsletter auto-detection and automated cleaning, it's equally effective at keeping your chaotic inbox in order.

Never again will you have to filter messages by hand, take unnecessary risks when deciding whether to open dubious email messages, or wrestle with complicated rules. Our guide reveals everything you need to know to take control of your email instead of letting it control you.



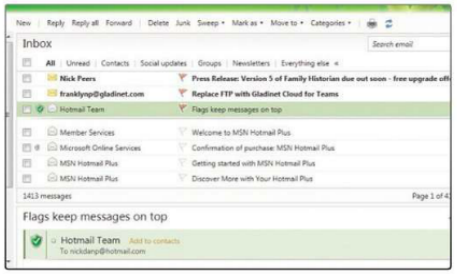
Jargon buster!

Phishing
A fraudulent technique for obtaining sensitive personal information such as passwords or credit card numbers, typically through fake websites.

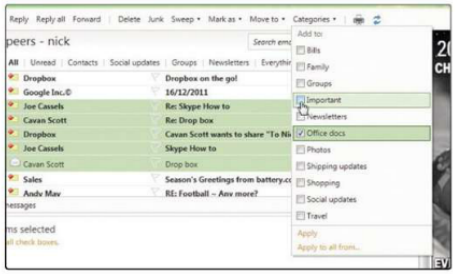
SmartScreen
A sophisticated filter employed by Hotmail and Internet Explorer 9 to provide reputation-based analysis of emails and downloads for fraudulent content and potentially malicious software.

Step-by-step | Organise your email

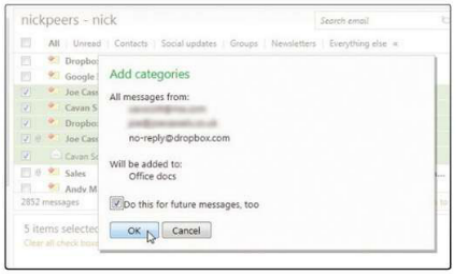
1 Log in or sign up
Log into Hotmail via **https://mail.live.com** using your Windows Live ID and password. Don't tick the box marked 'Keep me signed in' unless this is your own computer to make sure no one else can access your account. If you don't have a Windows Live ID, click the 'Sign up' button on the left and follow the simple prompts to create a free account.



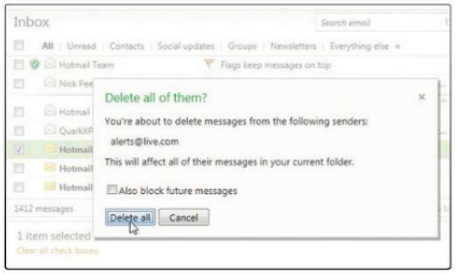
2 Keep messages visible
Click the flag next to a message and it will always be visible at the top of your inbox, however much time passes. If you want, you can hide a flagged message temporarily by clicking on the tiny arrow beneath the line that divides them from the rest of your inbox. You can remove a message from this list by clicking again on its flag to remove it.



3 Use Quick Views
You can organise your messages by filing them into folders, but a more convenient way to manage your inbox is to assign labels to selected messages via the Categories drop-down menu. Multiple labels can be assigned to individual messages. Once you've labelled your messages, you can then filter your inbox by clicking a category name under Quick Views.



4 Categorise your mail
You can quickly assign labels to all messages you've received from a particular person. To do this, just select one message from that person and then pick your labels from the Categories drop-down menu. Click 'Apply to all from...' and tick 'Do this for all future messages too' to automatically label future messages you receive. Click 'OK' and you're done!

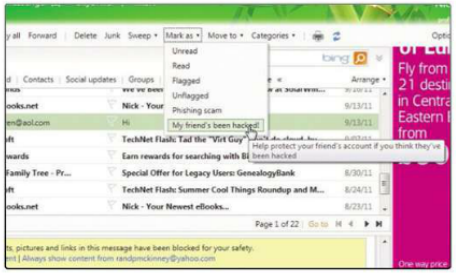


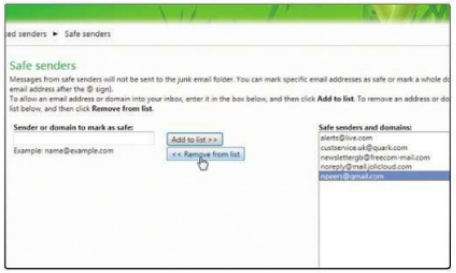
5 Perform a clean sweep

To give your inbox a spring clean, select one email, click the 'Sweep' drop-down menu and then choose 'Move all from' to move all messages from that person to a specified folder. You can also select 'Delete all from' to remove all messages from that person from your inbox. Tick 'Also block future messages' to add the sender to your blocked senders list.

6 Keep your mailbox clean

You can instruct Hotmail to automatically delete messages from a specified person after a set time. To do this, choose 'Schedule cleanup'. You can then opt to only keep the latest message from that person, or delete (or move) all messages from your inbox after a period of time. This can be three, 10, 30 or 60 days. Click 'OK' to perform the cleanup.



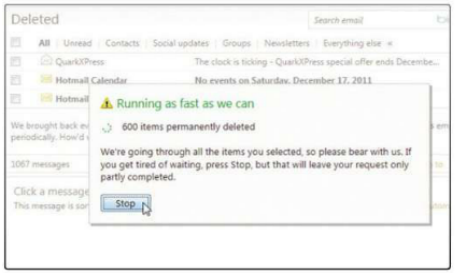


7 Mark spam

Only three per cent of spam now manages to get past Hotmail's super-efficient spam filters. If some gets into your inbox, you can mark individually selected messages by clicking 'Junk' or opening the 'Mark as' drop-down menu and choosing 'Phishing scam' if it's fraudulent. Select 'My friend's been hacked' if a suspicious email originates from a friend or family member.

8 Manage safe and blocked senders

If you trust a person, you can mark them as a safe sender. All you have to do is open one of their messages and click 'Always show content from…' You can remove people from the safe (and blocked) senders lists later by clicking 'Options > More options' on the menu bar, followed by 'Safe and blocked senders' under Preventing Junk Email'.



9 Add other mail accounts

You can also check other email accounts through Hotmail. Go to 'Options > More Options' and click 'Sending/receiving email from other accounts' under Managing Your Account. Click 'Add an email account', enter your email address and password, then click 'Next' to set it up following the prompts. Click 'Advanced options' to enter additional account information if required.

10 A friendlier, cleaner, safer inbox

You've now discovered for yourself just how easy, convenient and helpful Hotmail is. Log on now to take back control of your inbox without having to spend hours wading through unwanted mail or wasting precious time filing messages for quick and easy retrieval at a later date. Web-based email has never been so convenient! ■

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Learn how to...

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Your guide Rhian Drinkwater says...

"When it's time for a shiny new smartphone or a budget-setting new tariff, make sure you're getting the best deal with www.uswitch.com."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL
- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN
- 30 minutes

SUITABLE FOR
- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

You've probably heard us talk before about what great tools price comparison sites are. Whether it's your car insurance or a new computer, it's always worth taking a moment to check you're paying the lowest price around. We've recommended uSwitch before as great for choosing a better utility provider, but that's not all the site's about – it's also the first place you should look when choosing a new mobile phone deal.

Choosing a new phone can be pretty complicated. Do you opt for a cheap pay-as-you-go handset or a smarter phone on a more expensive contract? Maybe you don't you really need a new phone at all, just a new tariff? It can be hard to get your head round the options, so it's great to have one site that can guide you through the best deals. I'll show you how.

Step-by-step | Switch your mobile tariff

1 Going mobile

Head to www.uswitch.com in your web browser. If you hover your cursor over Mobiles in the top menu bar, you'll see a list of all the types of deals on offer. If you're looking for a particular phone operating system or deal type, choose this here but, if not, click on 'Mobile phone deals' (the first option in the menu) to see the best of what's available.

2 Pick and choose

From this page, you can choose from the 10 most popular mobile phones and then see the best deals on offer for each. If the one you're after isn't listed, choose it from the drop-down menus in the Phone finder, or if you haven't made up your mind yet click 'Browse' to filter all the offerings by features, manufacturer or even colour.

3 No phone

Of course, not everyone wants a brand new phone every time their contract expires or, if you're on pay-as-you-go, you may just want to change your tariff to one that suits you better. If you're not interested in getting a phone along with your new contract or tariff, save yourself some money, scroll down and click on 'See deals' under SIM only deals.

4 All you can eat

This will take you to a table you'll see a lot of on this site. It shows all the information you need about the available tariffs – minutes, texts, data allowance and of course the monthly cost. It automatically displays the generic best deals, but that doesn't mean that they'll be best for you. At the top of the table you'll see three sliders, for minutes, texts and cost per month.

5 Fine-tuning

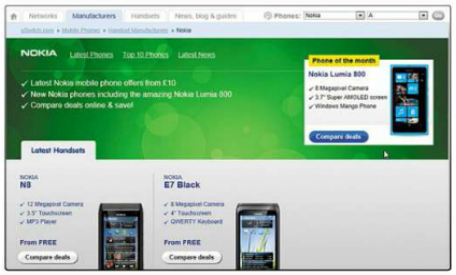
Now's the time to think about what's most important to you. Is it essential that you get 300 minutes and 500 texts every month? Then now's the time to choose them. If cost is your prime consideration, then move this slider first and see what comes up before adjusting the others. You can sort the table by any column, for instance to see the cheapest deal at the top.

6 Whatever you want

If you see the deal you want, click on 'See deal' on the right and you'll be taken to the provider's own website with the shopping cart all set up to buy your chosen product, whether this is just a SIM card or a brand new smartphone. Don't worry if you change your mind though – this opens in a new window, so just close it and you'll be back at the table.

7 All routes open

This process is pretty much the same no matter what route you take, so if you knew what you wanted at the start, you just needed to click on 'Android deals', or 'Pay as you go phones' from that Mobiles menu on the homepage to be taken to the relevant table. And if you're set on a specific phone provider, you can click on its tab to see only the deals it's offering.



8 Money saved

And there you have it – a shiny new handset or phone tariff, with everything you need for the lowest price you can find. Of course, it's always worth checking out somewhere such as www.techradar.com before you start, to read the reviews and get the full lowdown on whatever handset you like the look of or that has the features that most suit you. ■

Learn how to...

Make more of your email on the Windows desktop

Your guide Christian Hall says...

"Everyone has a webmail address but a desktop client gives you a much richer experience, as the free Windows Live Mail 2011 shows."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL
- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN
15 mins

SUITABLE FOR
- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

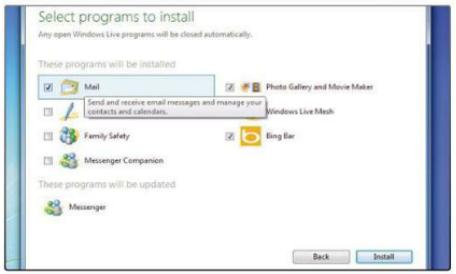
Windows Live Mail can really help you organise your life in one place on your PC. With a standard webmail account, such as Hotmail, you're stuck with having to sign in and out and are left with only the most basic email features.

With Windows Live Mail 2011 you can add and see multiple email accounts like Hotmail, Gmail, and Yahoo! Mail. You can even see your email, calendars and contacts when you don't have an internet connection. If you love the style of Gmail's conversation grouping then you can get that in Windows Live too. If you use your email a lot for sending photos, Windows Live Mail is also ideal. You can send a high resolution photo to contacts without filling up their inboxes, because it links to Windows Live SkyDrive.

Step-by-step | Get mail on your desktop

1 Download latest version

Windows Live Mail 2011 is available for Windows 7 and Windows Vista (from http://explore.live.com/windows-live-mail), but there is a slightly different version available for Windows XP users (see http://explore.live.com/windows-live-mail-xp). Choose 'Download now' from the website and click on the downloaded installer to begin the setup process.



2 Add account

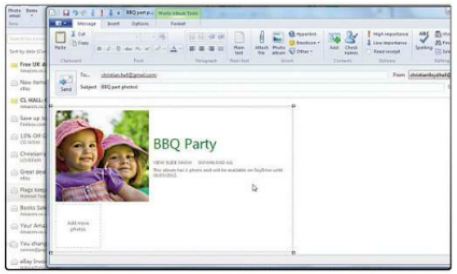
The download is actually the complete Windows Live Essentials setup manager and you can install many applications through it, such as Messenger, Writer and others, but in this instance we're just going to select Mail. So, click 'Install', then your PC will need to restart. When up and running, you add an email account by following the initial wizard.

3 Mail servers

Windows Mail supports three types of email servers. Thankfully, you don't need to intimately understand the finer details about the different server types; you just need to find out which one your email service uses for both incoming and outgoing emails, for example: pop.gmail.com (for incoming) and smtp.gmail.com (for outgoing). The simplest way is by using Bing.

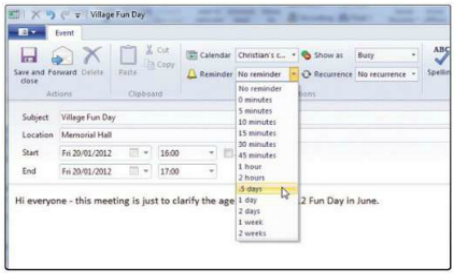
4 Change view

When you're up and running you'll see a variety of options shown on the interface's Ribbon. If you go to the View tab, you can select a particular view for your email – you don't have to stick to the default. So have a look through them and choose the one you prefer. Compact View gives you the most minimalist appearance, which is ideal for smaller screens.



5 Send a photo email

By utilising your free SkyDrive account you can send large photos to friends without overloading their inboxes. Choose Home > Photo email, then in the new window add photos from your PC and enter a recipient or recipients and a subject line. Thumbnails of the photos appear in the message body, where you can also add album details.



6 Create an event

There are two ways. For the first method, look under the Items menu on the Home tab. Choose 'Event' from the drop-down list and add the details to the new window, choose 'Forward' and enter email addresses. The second method is to create an event from an email, useful if you are discussing an event with friends. Select the relevant email then choose 'Add to calendar'.

7 Quick Launch options

When using Windows Live Mail in Windows 7 you can use the Quick Launch options for your major tasks, such as sending emails, sending a photo email or adding a new event or contact to your email account. Simply right-click on the Mail icon in the Taskbar and choose the option you want from the menu under the Tasks heading.

8 Add another account

Windows Live Mail enables you to add more accounts once you have one account up and running. Go to Accounts > Email to begin adding another email account. Enter the email address, password and tick 'Manually configure server settings' to add the correct incoming and outgoing mail servers for that account. Click 'Finish' and you're done! ■

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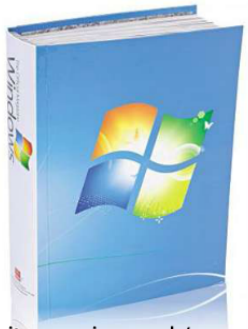

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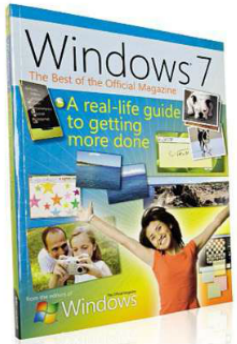

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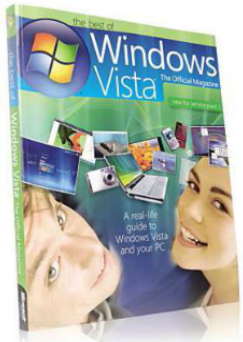

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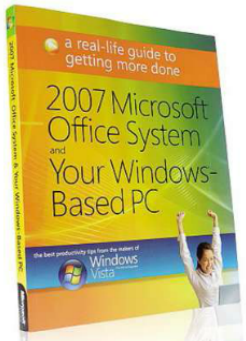

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Learn how to...

Create pro-quality movies

Your guide Richard Cobbett says...

"Don't inflict straight-off-the-camera footage on your family and friends – edit it first in PowerDirector."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL
Anyone can do it
▶ Straightforward
Tricky in parts

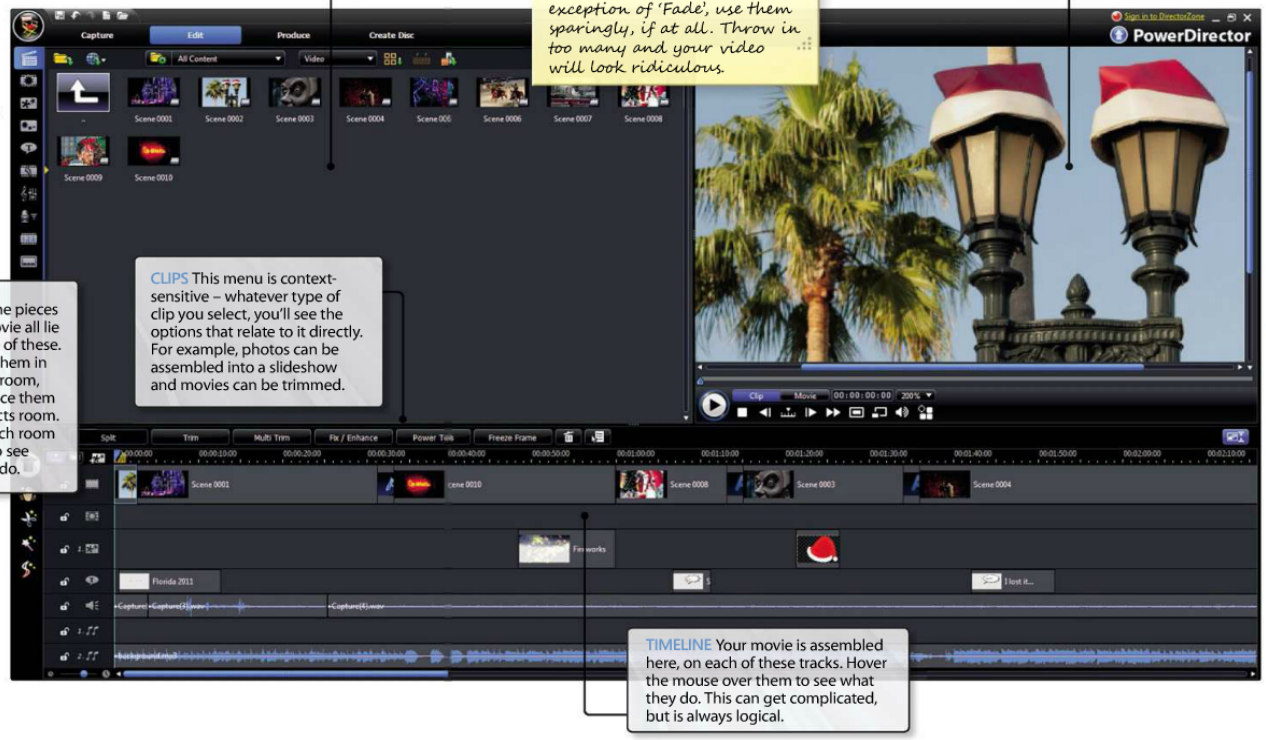
TIME TAKEN
▶ 1 hour

SUITABLE FOR
▶ Windows 7
Windows Vista
Windows XP

Whether you're shooting a holiday video or something more ambitious, getting good footage is only part of making a great movie. On the disc, you'll find a full copy of PowerDirector 8 Deluxe, along with a trial of the latest version, PowerDirector 10.

New features in PowerDirector 10 include an increase of the number of tracks on the timeline to a whopping 100, greatly improving picture-in-picture support and, in the Ultra edition, tools to transform your 2D videos into 3D movies. You'll find it much faster too, especially when working with HD video. And don't worry if you don't have a camcorder capable of shooting it – the built-in TrueTheater technology will take your standard footage and have a good crack at making it look like you do.

Upgrade to the Deluxe edition for £39.99 or the Ultra edition for £49.99 at http://bit.ly/w1EFNw.



Jargon buster!

▶ **Timeline**
Where you assemble your movie from multiple tracks, trim clips depending on what you want them to show, and add special effects and transitions.

▶ **Track**
A layer of your movie. This can be video, images, effects or audio. PowerDirector gives each track a specific purpose, but you can add extra.

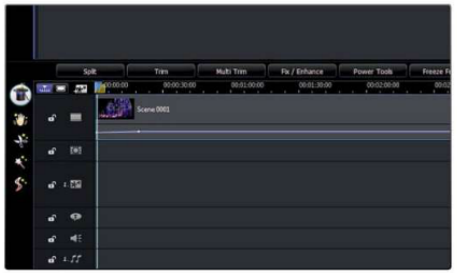
On your disc

You'll find the full version of **PowerDirector 8 Deluxe** in the software section

Step-by-step | Edit your footage

1 Import your footage

Before you can edit a video, you need its components. Click the 'Capture' tab. Along the top of the screen, you'll see icons for DV camcorders, HDV, TV signals, webcams, audio to be taken from either CD or microphone, and AVCHD. If you already have footage saved on your computer, return to the Edit tab and drag and drop them from Explorer into the library.

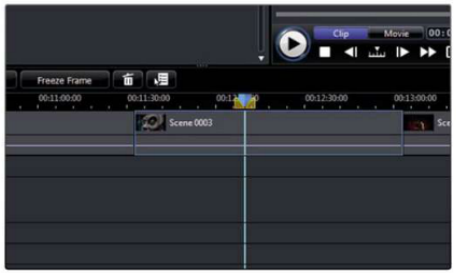


2 Quick assembly

To add your video clips to the movie, click on them in the media library one at a time and drag them onto the top bar on the timeline in roughly the right order. This is the Master Video Track. Once there, you can reorder them by clicking on them, holding down the button on the mouse and dragging them around. For the moment, ignore the other tracks you can see.

3 Clip and split

Long clips are best split into several shorter ones so you can reorganise your movie at will. Thankfully, you don't have to do this by hand. In the Media Library, right-click on a long clip and choose 'Detect scenes'. Click 'Detect', then 'OK' and the movie will be converted into a folder full of smaller clips that you can drag in at will.



4 Trimming the fat

Even shorter clips will usually need a little trimming to cut straight to the important bit. Select a clip on the timeline and drag the arrow under the viewer to find a suitable start point. Click the 'Split' button, then click the unwanted piece of footage and delete it from the timeline by clicking on the trash bin icon. You'll also want to do this for the end of the clip. ▶

Jargon buster!

▶ AVCHD
A video format created by Sony and Panasonic. Check your camcorder to see if yours supports it, but don't worry if not – the alternatives on offer are fine.

5 Fix your video

All clips benefit from a little post-production work. Select one in the timeline and click 'Fix/Enhance'. Each option here uses a simple slider. Make sure 'Compare video qualities in split preview' is selected and avoid clicking 'Apply to all'. Every clip will need different fixes.

6 Add transitions

Press [F8] or click the 'Transition room' icon to see the options for bridging clips. Pick one you like and drag and drop it onto one of the clips you want to transition between. If you find it too long or too short, click the 'Duration' button and type in the length you want – to the microsecond!

7 Effects and overlays

PowerDirector has three types of special effect – Effects, Picture in Picture and Particles. Each can be dragged from its room onto a clip and tweaked. These can be layered if you need more than one, and each has its own set of options – access these by clicking the 'Effect' button above the timeline.

8 Titles

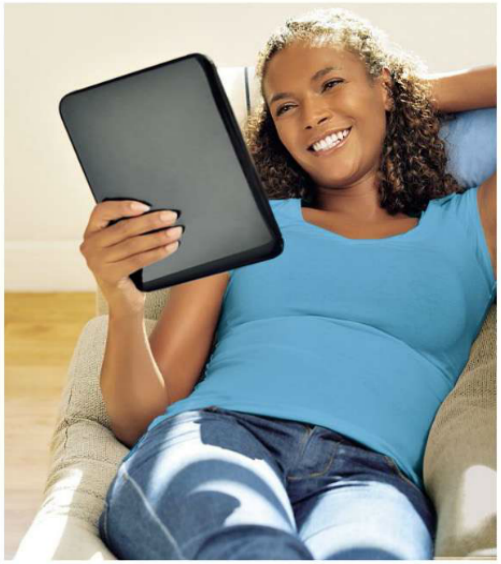
Titles are important enough for their own layer. Many of the defaults are very cartoony, but start with these and it's easy to turn them into something more professional-looking. Type over your movie in the right-hand screen, change fonts with the options above, and click the middle tab on the left to assign effects like scrolling. You can alter the title's length and position on the timeline directly.

9 Sound and music

You can record voiceover straight from PowerDirector, but for anything else, drag and drop the audio file into your media library and timeline just as you would with video. You can trim it down in exactly the same way. To avoid clashing with the audio on individual clips, click on the waveform to add control points and drag up and down on them to tweak the volume.

10 Produce your movie

Once everything is in place, it's time to export the finished movie for others to see. PowerDirector has presets for Facebook and YouTube, plus assorted file formats from AVI to RealMedia. In most cases, your best options are MPEG2 or WMV, each of which offer several profiles you can pick from to balance quality and file size. Finally, click 'Start' and sit back until it's done. ■



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Learn how to...

Measure your online influence using Klout

Your guide Rachael D'Cruze says...

"Ever wonder how much influence your social media input has? Find out with Klout, a free tool that measures your online power and even rewards you."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL
- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN
- 15 mins

SUITABLE FOR
- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

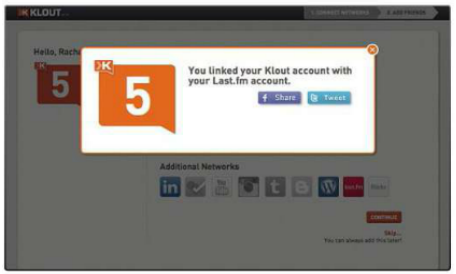
While we've always had the power to influence other people, that power, which is being democratised, is much easier to harness with new social media tools. But how much influence do you have over others? Do your Facebook 'likes', retweets, posts and comments go unnoticed, or are you an online mover and shaker? This is where Klout comes in, measuring your influence based on your ability to drive action in social networks, and providing you with an updated Klout Score each morning.

Klout provides insights to help you better understand your own power – whether others trust your opinions online, what topics are you the most influential on and how you compare with your friends. Your Klout Score measures your online influence on a scale of 1 to 100, but the average Klout Score is 20, not 50 – bear that in mind when you get yours.

Step-by-step | Score your online power

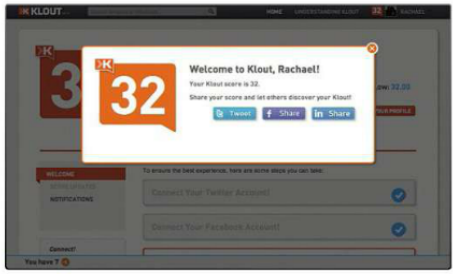
1 Get Klout

Head to www.klout.com. You'll see 'Sign In with Twitter' and 'Connect with Facebook' buttons. Click either of these to log in. A pop-up screen will now appear. Check the 'I'm an individual influencer' button and type in your email address, as requested. You are now signed up to Klout. Click 'I'm ready' in the new window and let the narcissistic fun begin.



2 Add networks

To get the most out of Klout, add all of the social media sites that you tend to use. Make your way through the social media icon buttons, which simply prompt you to sign in and give Klout permission to access your information. If there are some listed that you don't use, you don't need to click on them. When you are finished, click 'Continue'.

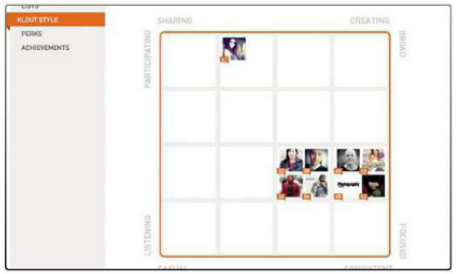


3 Get your score

You'll now be shown a range of your friends and followers from Facebook and Twitter. You can invite them to use Klout through the invite button, or skip this step. When you're done, click 'Continue' and in the pop-up window you'll see your Klout Score. Click the buttons underneath to share your score, using your various social media accounts.

4 Explore your score

You'll now be taken to your Klout dashboard. Click the red 'View your profile' button. At the top of your profile you'll be able to see how many people you influence through social media and what topics you are influential on. Look further down the page for an analysis of your Klout Score. As I said before, don't be too disheartened if it's in the region of 20.



5 Discover your Klout Style

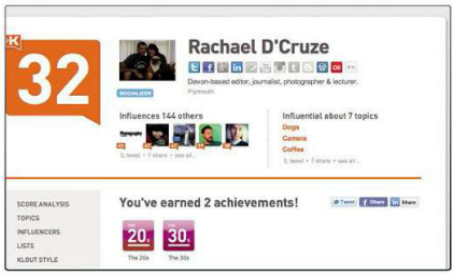
So, what does your Klout Score actually mean in terms of your social media presence? Your Klout Style will explain everything. Click the 'Klout Style' link on the left-hand side of the homepage. On the chart you'll see where you fit and get an explanation of your current Klout Score. It's great for seeing how your friends and followers fare too.

6 Manage your settings

Klout automatically pulls your About text from Twitter. If you want to change it, choose 'Settings' in the drop-down menu on your home page. You can type in an alternative profile, add your gender and birthday and change your profile picture. Joined more social media sites? Click 'Connected networks' and tell Klout about them as well, to help them track your score.

7 Take the perks

From the drop-down menu in the top right of your profile page, which is accessed by clicking your name, choose 'Perks'. Klout Perks are exclusive products and experiences that you earn based on your influence, which, of course, is measured by your Klout Score. Explore the perks to see if anything takes your fancy. 100 free MiniCards from Moo, maybe?



8 More Klout

You've now successfully got to grips with Klout and discovered how much online influence you have in your combined social media networks. As your online presence grows, your Klout Score will increase in accordance and you'll have earned more perks. So don't forget to check back regularly to see what goodies you've earned. ■

Learn how to...

Protect your home

Your guide Nick Odantzis says...

"It's good to know that your home is secure and, with GotoCamera and a webcam, you can make it just that."

At a glance...

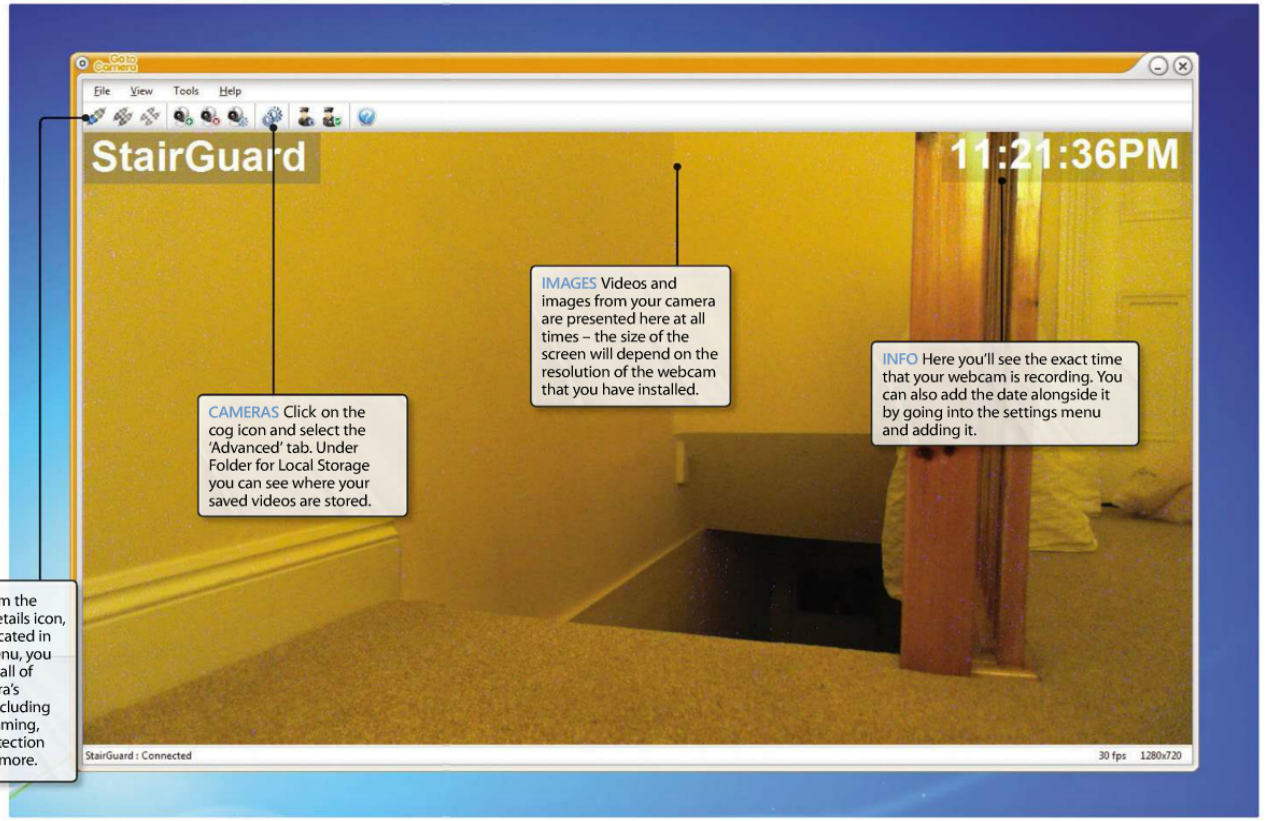
SKILL LEVEL
- Anyone can do it
- ▶ Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN
- ▶ 30 mins

SUITABLE FOR
- ▶ Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

The value of the goods in our homes is increasing, particularly with the number of mobile phones and games consoles we have. Getting them stolen is heart-breaking, too, due to the photos and personal documents we have stored on them. Fortunately, you've probably already got a perfect home security solution in the form of a webcam and an internet-connected computer. The free GotoCamera software enables you to check your webcam from afar, and includes support for motion detection.

It's still in beta, which means it's not perfect, but for free it does the job admirably. What's more, it's not just for home security; you can set it up to check on a sleeping baby from downstairs, or simply to see what the parking's like in your street.



MENU From the Account details icon, which is located in the top menu, you can access all of your camera's settings, including video streaming, motion detection and much more.

CAMERAS Click on the cog icon and select the 'Advanced' tab. Under Folder for Local Storage you can see where your saved videos are stored.

IMAGES Videos and images from your camera are presented here at all times – the size of the screen will depend on the resolution of the webcam that you have installed.

INFO Here you'll see the exact time that your webcam is recording. You can also add the date alongside it by going into the settings menu and adding it.

Jargon buster!

▶ **CCTV**
Closed-circuit television, which is used to protect business premises and streets around the world. It's 'closed-circuit' because it's generally only connected to one output, much like the software for HomeCamera.

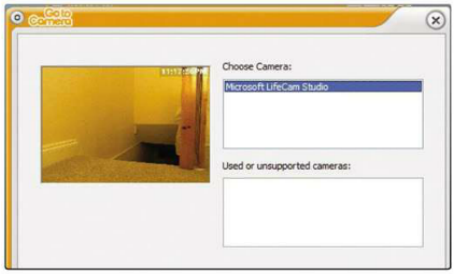
▶ **Motion detection**
Software or hardware that detects movement in video and triggers an alert as a result. It's important that it's set up correctly so that background movements don't set it off.

Step-by-step | Set up GotoCamera

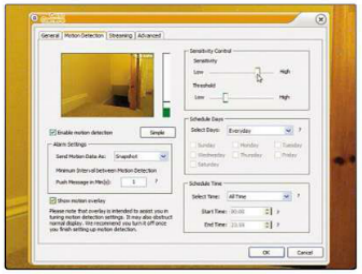
1 Register on the site
Plug in your webcam and then go to www.gotocamera.com and enter your details on the registration page. GotoCamera automatically sends you images from your webcam whenever movement is detected, and you can receive these via email or text message. Make your choice, then tick the box for the licence agreement and click 'Next'.

2 Download the software
On the next page, GotoCamera confirms your account creation. There's no need to check your email because the account is activated immediately, but you need to download a piece of software to get your webcam to work with GotoCamera. Select 'Click here' to download, then run the software.

3 Set up GotoCamera
Once it's downloaded, go to the file and double click it – this will start the installation. Follow the simple steps to install GotoCamera on your PC. Once it's finished it should launch automatically. Click the 'Start' button and enter your email address and password that you used when you signed up. Now click on 'Verify' to go to the next step.

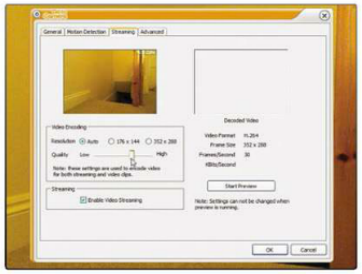


4 Choose your webcam
Once your email has been verified, you'll be asked to choose the webcam that you want to use. If you haven't connected it yet, plug it in and then select it from the list. You'll see that your webcam will be displaying video in the small screen if it's working correctly. Click 'Next' and on the next step select your preferred webcam video resolution. ▶



5 Motion detection

Once setup is complete, click the security icon to set up motion detection, select 'Enable motion detection' and click 'Advanced'. Select 'Show motion overlay'. Motion is showed in green and red. Play with the sliders to set the Sensitivity Control and deselect 'Show motion overlay'.

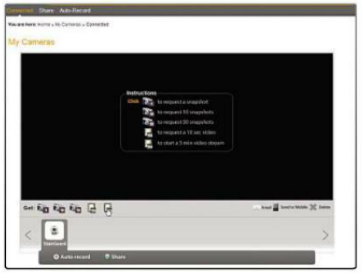


6 Streaming setup

To set up streaming, click on the 'Streaming' tab. Make sure 'Enable Video Streaming' is ticked, then adjust Video Encoding quality to suit. At any point, click the 'Start Preview' button to see how video looks. Now, log in to the site and you can access your webcams and change settings.

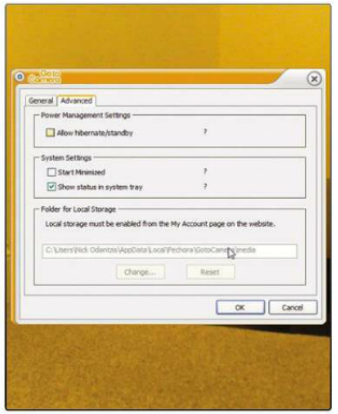
Jargon buster!

▶ Webcam
A digital camera designed specifically for recording video and images for the internet. They're less expensive than standalone cameras, but the quality is lower, too. They're perfect for home CCTV set-ups, though.



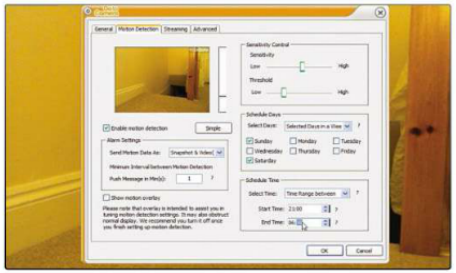
7 Remote access

If your software is set up, you can take videos and photographs from any location. It's a good idea to test it via your home computer first. Directly above your camera's name, you'll see icons to take images and video – click these to take them using your webcam.



8 The archives

Results from the webcam are displayed in the video area above – it's worth noting there will be a slight delay for the motion to be registered. Anything that's recorded is kept in the archives in case you need to access it later. You can see where your videos are stored on your home computer by going to the application, clicking the cog icon and then going to the 'Advanced' tab and looking under Folder for Local Storage.



9 Auto-record settings

You can set up GotoCamera to record footage at specific times. In the application, click the 'Setup camera' icon, select the 'Motion Detection' tab and click on 'Advanced'. Here you'll be able to specify when you record, as well as which days of the week and times. This is especially handy when you're at the office or going on holiday.

10 And you're set

Well done – after following these simple steps you've just got yourself a complete CCTV setup for the price of a webcam. We've shown you the basics of GotoCamera, but there are many more advanced features – take the time to explore the security software and you'll be surprised at just how versatile it is. ■

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Learn how to...

Organise all your receipts

Your guide Rachael D'Cruze says...

"Managing your accounts is a lot easier with OneReceipt – the hardest bit is taking a photo."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL
- Anyone can do it
- ▶ Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

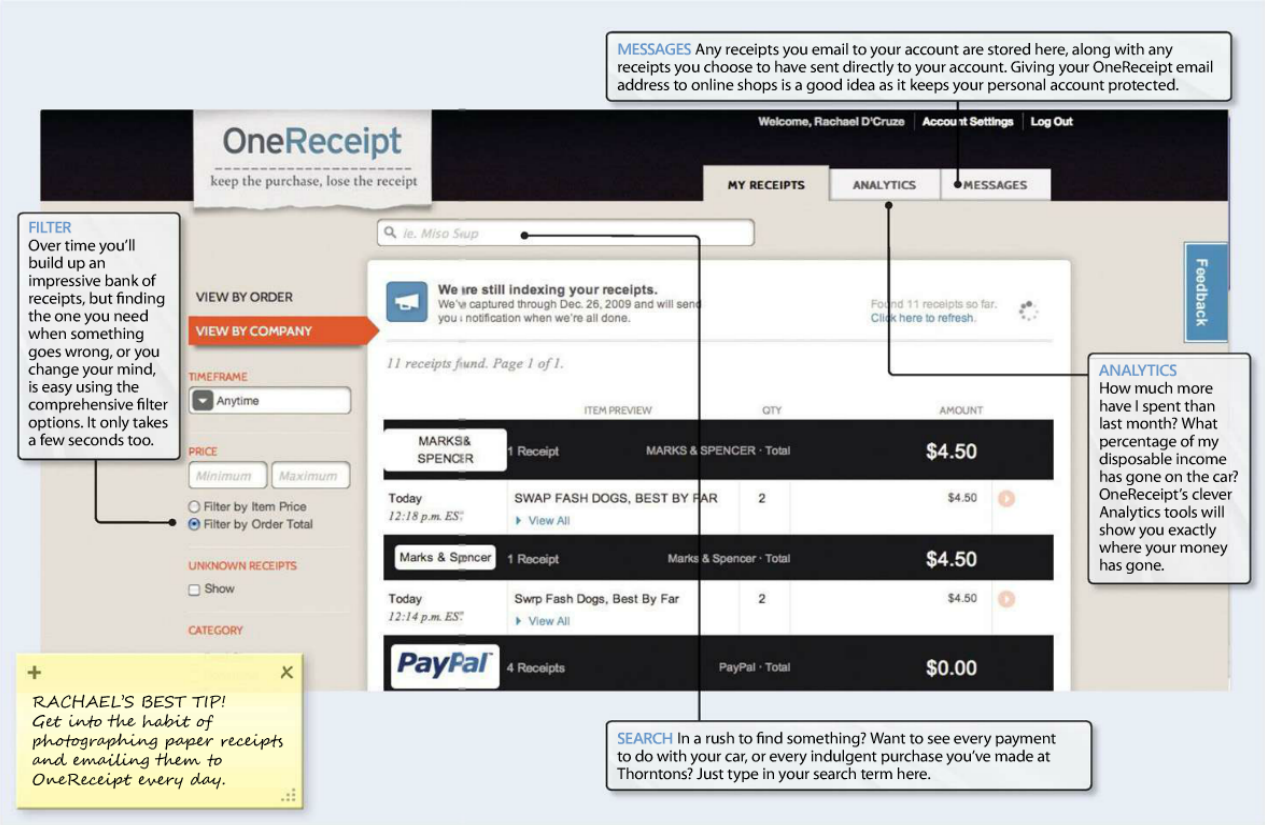
TIME TAKEN
- ▶ 10 mins

SUITABLE FOR
- ▶ Windows 7
- ▶ Windows Vista
- ▶ Windows XP

If, like me, you find it difficult to keep your receipts together, with the pesky paper ones always getting lost and the digital ones waiting to be accidentally deleted from your inbox, you'll love OneReceipt. It keeps paper and digital receipts in one place.

Indexing your spending records might sound like heavy work, but OneReceipt has made the process easy. The software will sync to Google and Gmail accounts, automatically pulling receipts into your personal space. Use a different email address? Simply forward your receipts to OneReceipt. Paper receipts are dealt with most impressively – simply take a picture with your phone and email it. The software does the rest.

Organising your receipts is child's play with OneReceipt's easy-to-use categorising and tagging system, and its filter search function makes it easy to find things, too. Plus it's free.

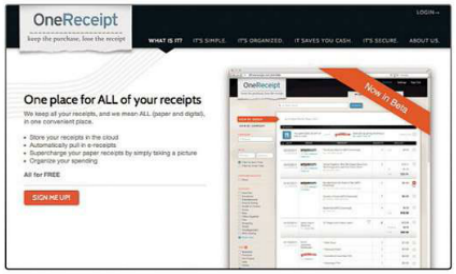


Jargon buster!

▶ **Sync**
Sync is an abbreviation for synchronisation. Data synchronisation is about establishing consistency in the information drawn from different places. OneReceipt uses it to get receipts from email addresses automatically.

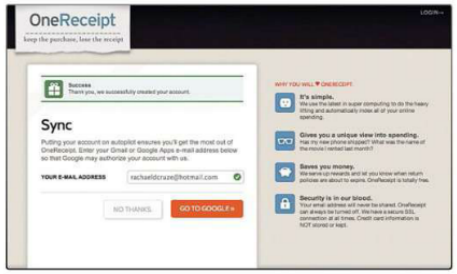
▶ **Tagging**
When we talk about tags in terms of computing, we're referring to a keyword or term assigned to a piece of information that lets you find it easily later, via browsing or searching.

Step-by-step | Organise your receipts



1 Sign up

Go online and head to the OneReceipt website, www.onereceipt.com, and click the red 'Sign me up!' button. Fill in your personal information in the 'Create a new account' form. If you have a Gmail or Google Apps email address, use that one. Click the red 'Create' button. That's it – you've now successfully created a OneReceipt account. Let the clean-up begin.

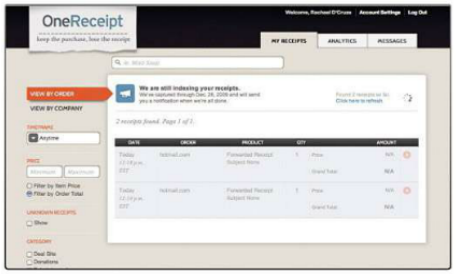


2 Sync it

If you are using a Gmail or Google Apps email address then you can sync your account with OneReceipt to get more out of it. Type your email address into the box and click the 'Go to Google' button. Next, click 'Grant access' and you are now synced. If you are electing to use another email provider, no problem, simply click the 'No thanks' button.

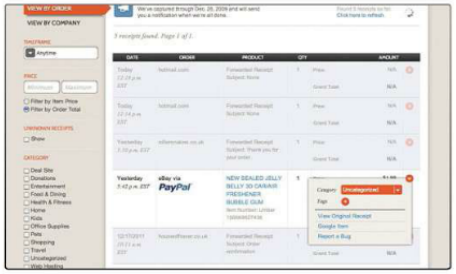
3 Get your email address

You'll now be taken to a registration success page, where you'll be given an @onereceipt.com email address – you will see this in the middle left of the page. This is an email address intended just for your receipts. You can use it when you shop online, so that confirmation emails are sent straight there, and forward other receipts to this account too.



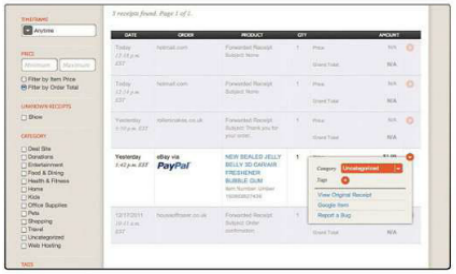
4 Give it time

OneReceipt will now set about indexing your receipts from your email address. This will take a little bit of time, but they'll send you a notification as soon as the process is finished. Be patient and in the mean time keep yourself busy by collecting your paper receipts, as well as receipts stored in other mail accounts if you have any, together...



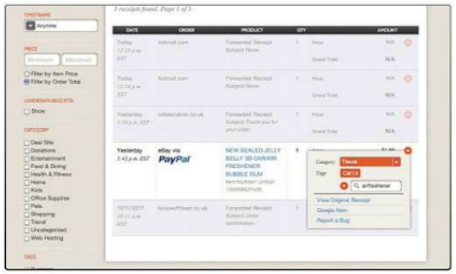
5 Add paper receipts

To add any paper receipts to OneReceipt, simply take a photo of the receipt with your phone and email it to your new @onereceipt.com email address. That's it – it'll now be logged in your Receipts. If you want to check, simply go to your Dashboard and click 'My receipts'.



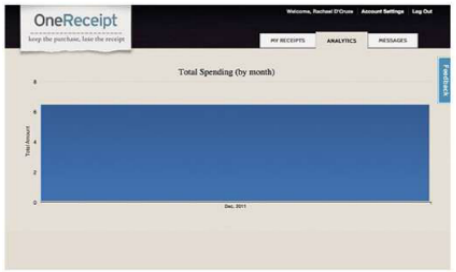
6 Forward receipts

If you have email accounts with providers other than Google, chances are you have receipts stored in these inboxes. To add these to OneReceipt, simply forward them to your @onereceipt.com email address – it only takes a second. You can forward as many receipts as you like, from any email account.



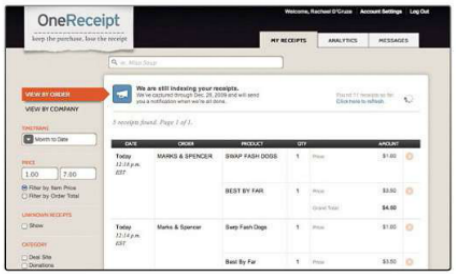
7 Categorise

While categorising your receipts isn't particularly fun at the time, it does help make searching a whole lot easier later on. Luckily it only takes a second with OneReceipt, too. Click 'My receipts', then click on the red arrow at the end of each receipt and choose a category from the drop-down menu. Add tags to make searching even easier.



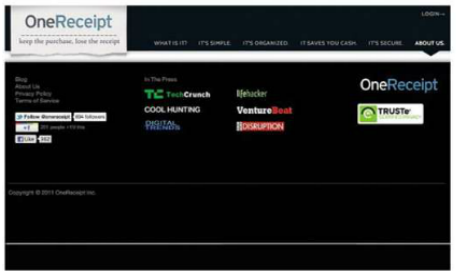
8 Analytics

If you get into the habit of using OneReceipt for all of your spending it can provide a clear and very useful view of your spending habits. Click the 'Analytics' tab at the top of the homepage, to view both your total spending by month and your spending by category. There's no hiding from the truth now! Perhaps it's time to bar yourself from eBay?



9 Filter

Want to know how much money you've spent on food, petrol or truffles this month? OneReceipt makes pinpointing your spending easy. In 'My receipts', just use the filters on the left-hand side to get the info you want – you can filter your receipts by date, amount, category and tags. Your result will automatically appear above your receipts.



10 Spread the word

So, that's it – you've signed up and got to grips with using OneReceipt. Once you've been using it for a while, you'll have an accurate view of your spending, as well as all your receipts in one place. If you want to share it with others, just click OneReceipt's social media buttons at the bottom of your dashboard and tell your friends all about it too. ■

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www.officialwindowsmagazine.com

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO KINDLE

Get more from your Kindle, and discover new ways that this powerful device can help keep you entertained

Amazon Kindle is by far the best e-reader on the market right now and, if you love reading, you want one. You might not realise it yet, but you do. In fact, we'll go one step further. If you've avoided it until now out of a totally understandable desire to hang on to traditional ink-and-paper books, you're actually the perfect candidate for one.

That may seem strange. After all, for keen readers physical books are special in a way that no digital file can ever hope to be, aren't they? A lump of plastic can never offer the same smell, the same texture and tactile experience as traditional paper. An ebook file can surely never hold the same memories as a beloved paperback.

This is only part of the story though. What the Kindle lacks in traditional charms, it makes up for in many other ways, like convenience. It holds well over 1,000 books in a device that's more portable than the average paperback. When you buy a book, you get it instantly, with no need to head into town or wait three days for delivery. You can even get the first chapter or so of every book in the Kindle store for free, and shop with the confidence that nobody on your commute will be able to see you're reading *Twilight* instead of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

And the list goes on. For access to books, you can't beat Kindle. And if you miss paper? Use that as well. Nobody says it has to be an either/or lifestyle.

One of the biggest misconceptions about the Kindle is the quality of its screen. It's nothing like trying to read from your monitor or a device like the Apple iPad, neither of which is much fun. Instead, it uses a technology called E Ink, which is much closer to the experience of reading ink on paper than pixels on a traditional screen. Also unlike an LCD, it only requires energy when you change the display, giving incredible battery life. To put this in context, the iPad lasts 10 hours between charges. The Kindle can easily go for a month.

As part of this technology, there's no backlighting or glass on the Kindle – and both omissions are for the best. Only with E Ink can you can read in bed without blasting your eyes with light that will keep you awake later (or annoying a sleeping partner), as well as in typically tablet hostile environments like the beach. The only disadvantages of these are that you do have to provide your own light to read with, and the screen is too fragile to go without a case. Amazon's own cases are good, but expensive. You can find much cheaper ones, so do shop around before handing over your cash.

SEE THE LIGHT The Kindle isn't backlit, so you'll need a light to read in the dark

THE DOWNSIDES

The downsides of going electronic are few and far between, but are worth noting. You can't lend or give away (most) ebooks, or borrow them from others. Your collection is also tied to one company and thus, at least in part, subject to its whims, though Amazon is a reasonably safe bet.

The final, oddest issue, is cost. Firstly, ebooks aren't recognised as 'real' books by the government, and are therefore subject to 20 per cent VAT, unlike paper books. There's also no second-hand market for data, and publishers have complete control over their pricing. To take one recent example, the Anthony Horowitz novel *The House of Silk* officially costs £18.99 in hardback, but Amazon sells it for £8.36. For Kindle, it's £9.99. On price, paper – ridiculously – still often wins.

When you buy your Kindle from Amazon, it arrives pre-registered to your Amazon account. All you have to do to set it up is point it to your Wi-Fi network and enter the password. Any books that you've already purchased will be automatically downloaded to it, and you're ready to start reading. If you were bought one as a gift, or picked one up from a store like Argos, you'll have to log in once to tell it who you are, but otherwise the process is identical. That's as technical as it gets.

You can buy books straight from the device by opening the menu and choosing 'Shop in Kindle Store', but it's easier to do it from a web browser. Every Kindle book on the Amazon storefront has two options – 'Buy Now With 1-Click' (with the option to choose a Kindle or Kindle app, though you can download it on any you've registered) and 'Send Sample Now'. Samples vary dramatically in generosity (with non-fiction books especially having an annoying habit of only giving you the intro) but are a good way to try out new authors. When browsing, the 'Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought' box is a great way of finding some.

Book purchases are one-click affairs; be careful of letting careless friends play without supervision

AUTO-DOWNLOAD

Switch on your Kindle and, as long as it can connect to your network, your books should auto-download. If not, open the menu and select 'Sync & Check For Items' to give it a quick nudge. Assuming you're not on the Touch model, pressing up and down on the keypad navigates through books, pressing left gives you the option to delete them, and pressing right brings up a longer menu to file books into Collections or order the full version if you enjoyed a sample enough to want to order the full thing.

One caveat though: book purchases are one-click affairs with no 'Are you Sure?' or password check. The confirmation screen has a 'Purchased by Accident?' button, but you'll still want to be careful of letting children/careless friends play with your Kindle without supervision.

KINDLE FACTS

It's not just for books! You can also subscribe to magazines, and newspapers that can be ready for you as soon as you wake up.

Once bought, you can download books from your Amazon account as often as you like, to multiple devices. Only Samples are removed forever.

E Ink gives you eight font sizes and three fonts to choose from. You never have to squint at tiny print ever again.

There are many free books in Amazon's Kindle store, and on sites like Baen Free Library and Project Gutenberg, that you can legally download and copy to your device.

There is a Kindle with a larger screen – the DX – but Amazon doesn't sell it in the UK. All the models over here have a 6-inch screen.

By default, the Kindle uses a portrait display. You can flip this to landscape if you like though, which helps for PDFs.

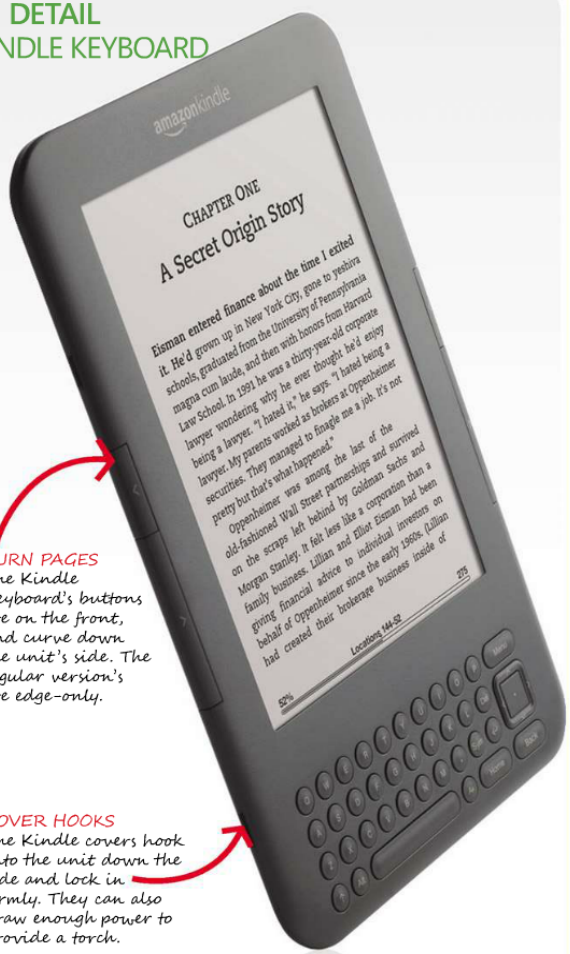
Page-turn buttons on either side of the Kindle make it just as comfortable for left- or right-handed users.

Along with your current place, your Kindle syncs your bookmarks and notes between devices for easy access.

The current Kindle doesn't come with a power adaptor, just a USB cable for charging through your PC. A plug to go on the end currently costs £9.

You can't gift Kindle books directly – it's only possible to buy a £10-£500 gift card. On the plus side, you won't end up with anything you don't want.

IN DETAIL
KINDLE KEYBOARD



TURN PAGES The Kindle Keyboard's buttons are on the front, and curve down the unit's side. The regular version's are edge-only.

COVER HOOKS The Kindle covers hook into the unit down the side and lock in firmly. They can also draw enough power to provide a torch.

CHOOSE YOUR KINDLE

KINDLE £89

The latest UK version. No keyboard, which you'll only miss if you want to do more than just download and read books, with the main controls being the page-turns on either side and navigation switches on the base. Oddly underpowered too – only 2GB of storage compared to other models' 4GB, no audio support, and a smaller battery.

KINDLE KEYBOARD 3G £149

While E Ink is too slow to make it fun to do proper work on the Kindle, you'll want the keyboard if you plan to take notes on your reading, or listen to audio. This version comes with free 3G data around the world, which makes it great for grabbing books on the fly, but don't expect a tablet.

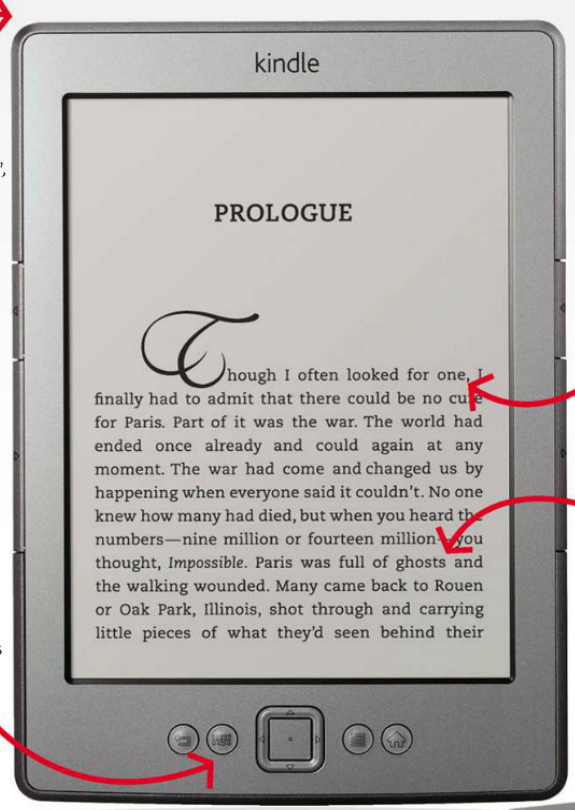
KINDLE TOUCH $99 – US ONLY

The latest version of the regular Kindle, controlled by swiping or tapping on the screen. The physical buttons of the regular version are arguably more comfortable for page turns, though touch controls work far better for selecting options and using the on-screen keyboard.

KINDLE FIRE $199 – US ONLY

A traditional tablet rather than an E Ink device. The Kindle Fire can be used for books, but it's geared more towards video and audio. Not much use outside of America due to Amazon's limited content distribution, but looks set to be a huge seller throughout 2012.

IN DETAIL KINDLE



SILVER BEZEL *The colour of it tries to make the Kindle 'disappear', helping you focus on the all-important words.*

6-INCH E INK DISPLAY *Monitors are unpleasant to read from, but E Ink is as easy on the eyes as paper. Greyscale only though.*

NO KEYBOARD *Losing the keyboard makes the new Kindle lighter and more convenient, though you'll miss it if you need to make notes.*

TOUCH CONTROL *If this was the Touch model, you'd be able to tap here to move pages without swiping.*

GET PUBLISHED

Anyone can put books onto the Kindle store, with no up-front costs, no publishing contract, and very little effort. You can get up to 70 per cent royalties on every copy sold, with your book available in the UK, US, and across Europe. You don't even have to buy an ISBN number.

Books can be uploaded as pure text files, but it's worth taking the time to do it 'properly', with a good title image, table of contents, and other trimmings. Scrivener (www.literatureandlatte.com) is one of the best tools for this, as well as for writing your book in the first place, and is available for both PC and Mac. Don't be suckered in by vanity publishing promises though, or even think about paying the hundreds-to-thousands of pounds they want for the service. You'll also have to put in most of the work actually marketing the book if you want to sell more than a handful of copies to your friends, especially if it's a novel or very niche subject.

Visit https://kdp.amazon.com for all the tools and information you need to get started, and to get a better idea of options like DRM and opting in or out of the US Lending system that can affect your ebook.

THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOUR KINDLE COULD DO

PLAY AUDIOBOOKS

And other audio files too! While it will sap the battery far faster than reading plain E Ink books, the Kindle Keyboard and Touch can play MP3 files, as well as full audiobooks from Audible.co.uk (which Amazon owns). In both cases though, you will need to connect the Kindle up to your computer to sync them across, using Audible's software to transfer those files.

READ YOUR BOOKS ALOUD

As long as the publisher hasn't switched off the option, and you don't mind being subjected to the robot version of Jackanory, the Kindle Touch/Keyboard can read out your books using a synthesised voice. You'll find the option on the font-control screen, with a choice of male or female voice and speed of talking. Choose it and it starts automatically.

READ NON-AMAZON BOOKS

Kindle supports its own copy-protected files and .mobi ebook format, along with plain text, HTML and PDFs. If you have an (unprotected) book in a different format though, typically .epub, all is not lost. Download Calibre from www.calibre-ebook.com and you can convert the file. To copy supported files on your own, such as HTML files from Project Gutenberg or similar, just connect the Kindle to your PC via USB and drag-and-drop them into the 'documents' directory.

BROWSE THE WEB

It's not a great browsing experience, but it's doable. Open the 'Menu', then go to the 'Experimental' option and you'll see a web browser. If you have the 3G model, it'll work anywhere, if not, you'll need to use a Wi-Fi connection.

READ WEB ARTICLES

Visit www.instapaper.com, create an account, and follow its instructions to find your Kindle's email address. Now browse the internet as normal, pressing the 'Instapaper' button in your browser when you find an interesting article you don't have time for. Instapaper bundles them up and sends a Kindle-friendly version every day. Handy!

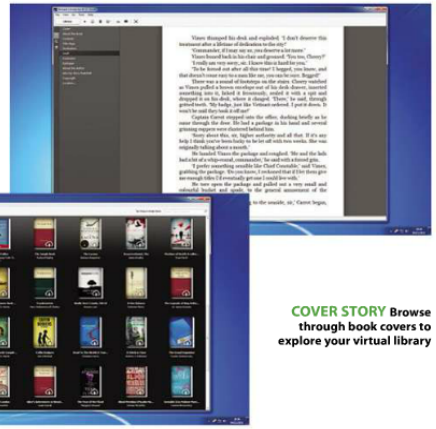
EASE COLLECTIONS PAIN

Sorting books into Collections is a tedious process on the E Ink screen. You can save some time in the future though by importing your collections between devices, ensuring you only have to do it once or twice. Alternatively, don't bother with Collections at all. Set your Kindle to show you newest first, and use Search to find old books.

KINDLE APPS

Along with the dedicated Kindle device, you can also get e-reader apps for PC, Mac, iOS, Android, Blackberry and Windows Phone 7. All can sync your reading position between devices, receive samples, and read any book in your Kindle library. This is great for reading a few pages on your phone while travelling or on hold, then picking up the proper Kindle at home in the evening and having it automatically open the book exactly where you left off.

One gotcha though is that most books have a maximum number of six devices that you can read them on, and some have fewer. (That said, a recent case where Haruki Murakami's *1Q84* seemed a one-device book turned out to be a mistake, and is the only time this has drawn any ire). As with much of the ebook world, we have to hope the publishing industry doesn't try cracking down on multiple devices in future, but have absolutely no guarantees.



ON-SCREEN Use the Kindle apps to catch up on your novel while sitting at your PC

COVER STORY Browse through book covers to explore your virtual library

PLAY MINESWEEPER

A slightly silly Easter egg, but still one that's fun to know about. If you have the Keyboard version of the Kindle, press [Alt] and [Shift] and [M] simultaneously to bring up this classic game. From the *Minesweeper* screen, you can also play a game of *5-in-a-Row* against your Kindle. A good way to kill time on a journey if you're not in the mood for reading.

CRASH

Yes, your Kindle may occasionally freeze up. If so, don't panic. Hold the power switch to the side until it resets (10-30 seconds), then flick it again if necessary to turn it on. Obviously, if this happens a lot – and it shouldn't – give Amazon a call to see if your unit is defective.

TAKE SCREENSHOTS

On the Kindle keyboard, press [Alt] and [Shift] and [G] to take a screenshot, and on the Kindle Touch, hold the Home button for three seconds, tap the screen and release the button. The image is saved on your Kindle, and can be found by plugging it into a computer and opening the device in Explorer or Finder. Why would you want to do this? It's an easy way to copy/paste for reference or sharing. ■

VERDICT

We've played with many ebook readers and the Kindle beats them all. It's not simply the device itself – good though it is, most e-readers are very similar – but the Amazon ecosystem behind it. Nobody else is in a position to offer as much great content, or make acquiring it so easy. There are definitely things that could be done to improve the Kindle, including ePub support and fewer insane restrictions on the part of publishers, but none of those issues stop it being a great buy.

The main downside of moving to ebooks from physical books is simply one of ownership. You don't own your books in the same way as if you had the physical one, and won't be lending or handing a beloved book down to your kids in 30 years' time. An ebook won't stop working, or fall apart when the glue wears out in the spine, but it's something to read now, not down the road. If you want to be sure, buy a physical copy and put it in a vacuum-sealed case. If you just want to read the book though, consider downloading it. It'll be the same story, the same words, the same basic experience after the first few pages, and a much lighter load for your poor postman.

10 WAYS TO GET MORE FROM WINDOWS PHONE 7.5 MANGO

The Mango update is a huge leap forward, but there are a few settings you'll want to change to make the most of it. Here are our ten recommended tweaks.

By Mary Branscombe

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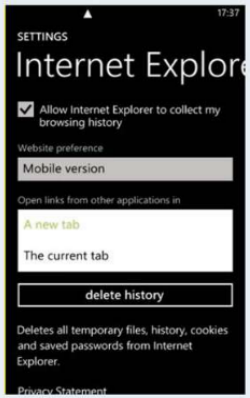


1 MULTIPLE TABS IN IE9

Mango includes the mobile version of IE9 so you can now load just about any website, but if you follow a few links from your tweets section and then open the tabs, you won't see anything except the last page. Annoyingly, by default the browser loads all the links from other apps in a single tab. Change the setting in Internet Explorer for 'Open links from other applications in' to 'A new tab' and you can have multiple pages load in the background.

Follow a link then press and hold the back key to jump back while the page is still loading, and instead of waiting you can read some more updates, click some more links and then go back to IE9 and read the pages that have loaded in the background.

IMPROVED BROWSING To have multiple web pages load in separate tabs you need to set this up yourself. It's a simple change and one that makes your browsing experience much better

2 TURN OFF LIVE CHAT

If you want to use Messenger and Facebook chat like text messages then you're in luck, as it's built-in on Mango. You can swap between SMS and Facebook chat or Messenger IMs in the same conversation using the Switch button and swipe across to see which contacts are online.

It's a great feature, but it does use up battery life – even if you don't use it and you can't see any online contacts. If you're not planning on using it, then check Settings > Applications > Messaging and slide Facebook Chat to Off to eke out a bit more battery.

BATTERY EATER Facebook chat is on by default in Mango. Turn it off to save battery

3 DON'T SHARE EVERYTHING

You don't want to automatically share every picture you take on your mobile – especially if you're snapping an expenses receipt or a credit card statement that you want to save. You can still save all your photos to Windows Live SkyDrive if you want, but now you have to turn it on using 'Settings > Applications > Pictures + Camera > Automatically upload to SkyDrive'. You can also pick whether you want to see a shortcut for Twitter, Facebook or SkyDrive on the menu for individual photos.

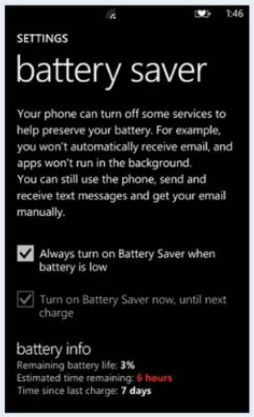
IN YOUR IMAGE Configure picture sharing so your images get sent only to the places you want them to go

4 CHOOSE MANGO-READY APPS

One reason we like the AppFlow app more than the official Marketplace app for browsing new programs is the way it highlights apps that take advantage of the best Mango features, with useful live tiles and background multitasking.

Whether you're pinning an exchange rate to work out your holiday money, the weather in a specific city you're about to travel to or your journey home to check for delays, live tiles make apps that are designed specially so that Mango is more useful. This is even more the case when the tile itself gives you so much information that you don't even have to launch them to get what you need. It's definitely worth taking a moment when buying to check that you'll be able to get this functionality with any app you choose. It'll make using your phone that bit more intuitive.

5 TURN ON BATTERY SAVER



There are now more things included in the Mango operating system that can use up your battery, such as background apps and GPS. Handily though, there's an automatic power saving feature that's not switched on by default – Battery Saver. You can turn it on by going to 'Settings > Battery Saver'. When you get down to 20 per cent battery, email will stop syncing automatically, live tiles won't update and apps won't run in the background, although you still get fast switching and you can still sync email manually if you're expecting to be sent an important message.

GOT THE POWER You might see a prompt to turn on Battery Saver when your battery first starts to run low, or just do it earlier

6 SET UP WEB APP INSTALLS

If you read about a cool app when you're using a computer, you don't have to pull out your phone to get it. Instead, browse the Windows Phone Marketplace in the Zune software on your PC, and set apps to install when you next connect your phone. Or you can browse the web version of the Marketplace at www.windowsphone.com and send apps directly to your mobile – you just need to fill in your phone number and accept the terms.

If your mobile network isn't feeling helpful, you'll get an email with a link to the app in Marketplace. But if everything is working right, a text you never see tells your phone to install the app straight away.

GET SYNCED Syncing your phone with your home PC is simple

7 WIRELESS SYNC

It's not new to Mango, but wireless sync is so useful it's worth mentioning again. Connect your handset to your home Wi-Fi network and choose 'Settings > Wireless Sync' in the Zune software while your computer is connected to the same wireless network. The Zune software will pair with your phone and whenever it's plugged in and on your Wi-Fi network (and you're not using it) it will sync photographs and music (as long as your computer is on too). Set up sync lists of dynamic playlists such as Smart DJ lists and you'll get new music delivered automatically.

8 TAKE CONTROL OF MULTI-TASKING

With apps that are written to run in the background in Mango 7.5, you get to switch back from another app instantly and things carry on in the background – such as music playing and settings syncing. But just because an app can run in the background doesn't mean that you want it to. Good apps will have a setting to enable you to choose, and you can also turn them off from 'Settings > Applications > Background Tasks'. Check the 'Advanced' button for a list of all apps that do background processing, whether or not you can control that. At this point your only option is to uninstall them, but at least you know which apps will carry on running and can make that choice.

"Install more games – once you've got 20 installed, the games you've played recently will move to the top of the list"

9 INSTALL MORE APPS

In 7.5 Mango, installed apps are still arranged alphabetically, but you can also tap on any letter to bring up an on-screen alphabet so you can get to them quicker. However, the letters dividing your apps only appear if you have 43 or more programs installed so it's worth aiming for that number for easier navigation. There's a trial version of most apps in the Marketplace, so try out everything that looks interesting. While you're at it, install more games. Once you have 20 games installed, the Games Hub puts the games you've played most recently at the top of the list.

MORE IS BETTER The more apps you have, the easier Windows Phone 7.5 makes it to navigate through them quickly

10 PIN WI-FI SETTINGS

One of the little annoyances with the original Windows Phone OS was having to go all the way into Settings whenever you wanted to turn Bluetooth and Wi-Fi on and off – such as when you wanted to save some battery life and didn't need the connectivity. Mango now gives apps more access and lets you pin tiles for features within an app. There are several apps that let you pin a link to Wi-Fi or Bluetooth settings directly to your Start screen – our favourite is Toggle, which also lets you pin tiles for data, airplane mode and reminders. ■

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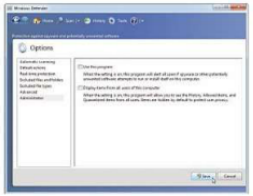
Support

▶ WINDOWS HELP ▶ HARDWARE FIXES ▶ SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS ▶ INTERNET TIPS

Do you have a PC problem? Get in touch...
Email full details of your problem to the support team and we'll do our best to help supportsquad@futurenet.com

Windows
LAPTOPS WON'T RESPOND

Q My two laptops running Windows 7 Home Premium keep getting 'not responding' messages lasting for between five and 20 seconds when completing tasks. I've spent a total of about eight hours on the telephone speaking to various helpdesk technicians. Unfortunately it's got me nowhere since no one's been able to solve the issue. I want to avoid my laptop manufacturer's suggestion of restoring factory settings. Can you help?
Charles Moore



CONFLICT RESOLUTION **Disable Windows Defender if you have McAfee installed**

Nick's solution
Our response was to offer general advice – a full reinstall or recovery would have almost certainly resolved the problem, but because it appeared the laptops were somehow overloaded or suffering from some kind of conflict, we pointed Charles to our 'Faster PC now' guide from issue 62 (also available online at www.bit.ly/tdGzNy), which includes lots of useful advice on streamlining your computer and giving it a much needed speed boost.

Charles found that the key cause of his woes was a conflict between McAfee Internet Security and Windows Defender, which were both attempting to scan at the same time, resulting in his laptop briefly locking up with 'Not responding' messages as the two applications fought for system resources. McAfee should have disabled Windows Defender automatically but, for whatever reason, it often doesn't do so. It's straightforward enough to disable Windows Defender manually though. To do this, open Windows Defender from the Start menu. Click 'Tools' followed by 'Options', then select 'Administrator' and untick 'Use Windows Defender' before clicking 'Save' to finish the process and resolve the conflict.

Internet
EMAILING PHOTOS

Q How can I reduce the size of a photo to send it as an attachment to an email in Windows Live Mail? I right-click the image and choose 'Send to > Mail recipient', then choose the size at which I wish to send the mail, but Windows Live Mail creates an email saying the photograph will be available on Windows Live SkyDrive. How do I bypass this to send it as a normal attachment?
Mike Houghton

James's solution
The default action in Windows Live Mail is to upload your photos to your Windows Live SkyDrive account to share with others – this helps reduce the size of the initial email. However, since you've already picked the option to keep the picture size (and therefore the email size) down, this default behaviour isn't wanted.

Thankfully, it's easy to bypass: when the new mail message appears, simply double-click on the picture displayed in the email body and you'll see the Format ribbon appear at the top of the window. Click the paperclip button on the left and your photos will be attached to your mail message in the usual way at the size you specified when using 'Send to > Mail recipient'.

FIND THE SOLUTION! *McAfee Services and Support*
If you're using a McAfee product, bookmark the support portal (http://service.mcafee.com) for future reference.

RESIZED PIC **Click the paperclip icon in Windows Live Mail to send pictures as attachments**

Windows
DRIVER UPDATES

Q After reinstalling Windows XP on my Compaq Presario computer, I needed to update my drivers. I got a driver scanning tool, which tells me I have quite a few out of date drivers, but when I check with Device Manager it tells me my drivers are current. Is it that Device Manager doesn't scan the internet for drivers, or is this driver scanner just trying to make money from me?
Daniel Hindes

Adam's solution
There are two types of drivers available for computers. The first are 'signed' drivers, which have been submitted to Microsoft for vigorous testing. If they pass, they're made available for download through Windows Update. 'Unsigned' drivers haven't gone through this process. They may be as stable and safe as signed drivers, but they've simply not been tested because it's a costly and lengthy process.

Device Manager will only search Windows Update for signed drivers, whereas the driver scanning tool will also include unsigned drivers in its search. You can get driver-scanning software that allows you to install drivers for free – albeit with restrictions such as having to install the drivers manually after they've been downloaded. DriverEasy (www.drivereasy.com) is one such tool.

Alternatively, just visit the support section of your computer manufacturer's website and you should find all the latest drivers for your make and model of PC available in one, convenient, central location. You might even find that your manufacturer provides an update tool that will do all the hard work for you.

> "You might even find your manufacturer provides an update tool"

UPDATE TOOLS **Check if your computer manufacturer has a driver update tool for your PC**

Hardware
COMPUTER WON'T BOOT

Q I recently bought a memory upgrade for my Targa PC using the Crucial Memory Advisor. However, the machine won't boot with the memory installed, even though Crucial assures me it's the correct memory based on the information obtained from the scanner, which identified this computer's motherboard as an Asus A7N8X Revision 2. Can you please help?
Patrick Morris

Matt's solution
Patrick had replaced two 256MB RAM sticks with three 1GB sticks, and his PC failed to get past the initial boot sequence, indicating the problem was a hardware one. He'd been back in touch with Crucial, who had suggested he needed a BIOS update to support the memory upgrade, something he investigated with no success – basically his ASUS board was manufactured for Targa and Targa's website had no BIOS update.

The new sticks were too fast for Patrick's motherboard and we

Quickfire questions

Since upgrading to a 64-bit motherboard, Lotus SmartSuite 97 no longer works properly with Windows XP.
Dennis Munday
Dennis resolved this problem – presumably some kind of compatibility issue – by upgrading to Lotus SmartSuite 9.8, which is fully compatible with Windows XP.

My Windows XP computer will no longer burn discs using the built-in disc-burning tool. How do I resolve this?
Patrick Walsh
Try running the automated fix-it tool at www.bit.ly/spH4ZW. If this fails, remove any third-party burning software using a clean-up removal tool you download from the program's website.

Jargon buster!

▶ Attachment
Any file that is sent via an email message.

▶ Boot menu
A menu that appears if more than one copy of Windows is installed on your computer, giving you a choice of which version to start.

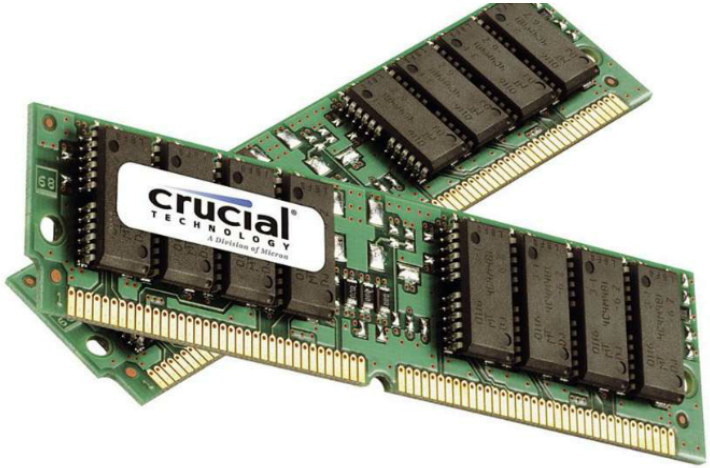
▶ Lotus SmartSuite
An alternative office suite to Microsoft Office that is no longer actively developed – the last version (9.8) was released in 2002.

Quickfire questions

How can I obtain Service Pack 3 for Windows XP on CD? I'm on a dial-up connection.
Edward Moreman
Visit www.bit.ly/sp3cd in your internet browser, which will redirect you to the Microsoft European store where you can buy Service Pack 3 on CD for £5.98 to cover manufacturing and shipping costs.

How can I resolve Security Warning messages referring to Amazon.com and a trusted site marked res://ieframe.dll?
Roger Brown
Open the Internet Options Control Panel, switch to the 'Security' tab, click the 'Reset all zones to default level' button and click 'Apply'. This will return Internet Explorer to its default medium-high security setting and should prevent the Security Warning message from appearing.

I've received some files from a friend in MSG format on CD. Please can you tell me how I read them on my computer?
Adam Eaves
MSG files are email messages stored in Microsoft Outlook format. If you don't have Microsoft Outlook installed, you'll need a third-party application like MSG Viewer Lite (US$30, www.bit.ly/rJRYgq).



would have counselled him to return them and ask for slower memory in return. In the event, though, a helpful neighbour was able to get into his BIOS and reduced the memory speed settings from 200MHz to 166MHz, at which point the computer was able to boot successfully. Despite this slower setting, Patrick now enjoys much better performance thanks to the extra RAM installed.

MEMORY WOES
If memory is too fast for your motherboard then it won't work correctly

Microsoft Office

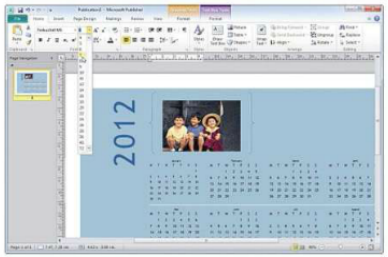
CALENDAR PROBLEM

Q I recently bought Microsoft Office Professional for Microsoft Publisher. I'm trying to print out a 2012 calendar using the Photo Album template set to 'One year per page', but dates keep getting truncated (for example, January only goes up to 29th and December only goes up to 30th). Please can you tell me how I can resolve this?
Ray Bullock

Adam's solution
The problem is that the template is geared towards only displaying five rows of dates per calendar month. In the cases of January and December, both months start on a weekend, so they require six rows to fit on.

The solution to this problem was found by Ray's son-in-law – he reduced the size of the font for the affected months to 7pt from 8pt, allowing six rows to be displayed. Interestingly, it appears to be a problem with the default font for this template – Trebuchet MS. Try choosing another font when setting up the wizard and you should find that the adjustment to the way the calendar displays dates is made automatically.

MISSING DAYS
Try reducing the size of the text to reveal missing dates on your calendar



WINDOWS WATCHDOG

A disappearing web host and sites that try to trick you are the focus of our investigation this month

COMPANY UNDER INVESTIGATION: eBay Seller
SUBMITTED BY: Harold Tokins
NATURE OF COMPLAINT: Harold bought Microsoft Office 2010 from an eBay seller and found difficulty getting support when he hit an installation problem.

Nick's solution
Three of the four programs in Harold's copy of Microsoft Office worked fine, but when he tried to launch Excel there was an error. He had been told by the seller that there were "two licenses remaining" on the software to be activated. Having bought the software in good faith and, as he thought, legally, Harold contacted Microsoft for support.

Unfortunately, Harold soon discovered that he wasn't covered for installation support on his Windows 7 set-up – and when an operator suggested that he would have to pay extra for per-incident support it came as a bit of a shock and he wasn't happy.

Harold ran into this trouble because it's not actually legal to transfer the 'remaining licenses' on Microsoft software in this way. So although he bought it as new, downloading the software online, he didn't have the same rights as the original user. Harold paid nearly £60 for the Microsoft Office suite so, in return for having to pay extra for support, he didn't even save much on the price of a new copy.

STATUS: CASE CLOSED
It's a grey area buying second hand software and the risks involved are rarely worth the money you might save. Where possible, we'd always advise buying new and making sure you own all the associated licenses and rights of use.

COMPANY UNDER INVESTIGATION: Printmania101
SUBMITTED BY: Ruth Brown
NATURE OF COMPLAINT: eBay is a safe place to buy and sell, if you keep an eye out for the warning signs. Ruth Brown lost money because she neglected to read negative feedback.

James's solution
Laser cartridges can cost a lot of money, so our reader tried to save money by purchasing through eBay. When she fitted the cartridge, it didn't work. No problem, according to the seller's returns policy, she could send them back for a full refund. She contacted Printmania101 through eBay. She didn't get a reply. Several emails and weeks later, she was sent a postal address to send the cartridge back. She did that, by recorded delivery. But still no refund came through.

When she contacted us, we advised her to use eBay to request the seller's phone number, which you can do under extreme circumstances. She managed to call the seller who told her that proof that the item had arrived at the address – a PO Box number – wasn't proof it had been picked up. We told Ruth to escalate the matter with a PayPal dispute.

STATUS: CASE CLOSED
Shortly after the PayPal dispute, Printmania101 refunded Ruth, although she never got her postage back. Printmania101 no longer trade on eBay.

> "It's a grey area buying secondhand software. We'd always advise buying new"

Hero of the month...

ORANGE

Orange has worked hard to turn around its customer service reputation. Murray from Ireland says a problem with his iPhone meant it accidentally connected to the net while he was on holiday. He came home to a gargantuan bill. One call to customer services later and it was all written off. "I didn't have to explain or plead," says Murray.

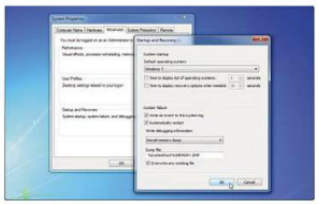
NO QUESTIONS ASKED
Orange simply wrote off Murray's accidental iPhone charges without any argument

Feel like you're being ripped off? Let us know...
If you're experiencing problems and want us to help, or want to nominate a Hero of the Month, get in touch by emailing supportsquad@futurenet.com with the subject Watchdog

REMOVING UNWANTED BOOT MENU ENTRIES

Q After a false start, I reinstalled Windows 7 only to discover that there are now two entries in the boot menu. The default loads Windows 7 after a 30-second delay, while the other asks me to insert the installation disc and restart my PC. How can I fix this niggle?
Gordon Jepson

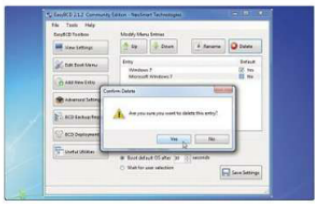
James's solution
For a quick workaround, follow step 1 of the guide opposite or, for a more permanent solution, follow steps 2 to 4.



1 Hide the entry
Click 'Start', right-click 'Computer' and select 'Properties'. Click 'Advanced System Settings' in the left pane then click 'Settings' under 'Startup and recovery'. Untick 'Time to display list of operating systems' and click 'OK'.

2 Modify boot menu
Browse to http://bit.ly/yHu3ax, scroll down and click the 'Download free for limited, non-commercial use' link to download Easy BCD to your PC. Double-click the file and follow the prompts to install the software.

3 Take a failsafe
Let the program launch. A summary of the boot menu settings will be displayed, complete with both entries present. Click 'BCD Backup/Repair' followed by 'Backup settings' to take a backup of the boot menu.



4 Remove unwanted entry
Now click 'Edit boot settings'. Assuming Windows boots correctly after 30 seconds, the entry you wish to delete is marked 'No' under Default. Select this and click 'Delete' followed by 'Yes' and 'Save settings' to finish.

Jargon buster!

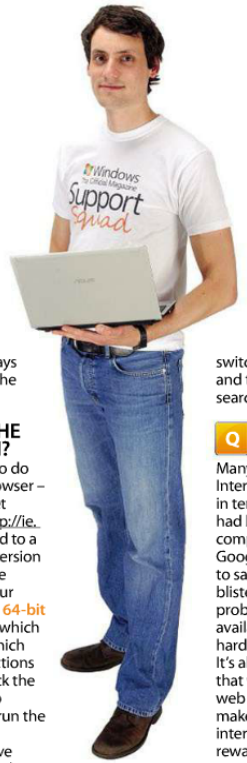
RAM
Stands for 'random access memory' and refers to the memory installed in your PC. The more RAM, the the better your computer will run.

Zones
Specific parts of the internet divided up for the purposes of assigning different levels of security for websites depending on which zone they're allocated to.

HOT TOPIC! GET MORE FROM...

IE 9

We answer all your queries about Microsoft's web browser



WHAT IS IT?

Internet Explorer 9 is the latest version of Microsoft's web browser – a program that interprets the text and images behind web pages and displays them neatly on your screen. Without a web browser, the internet wouldn't be nearly as pretty! Internet Explorer has been around since the mid 1990s and remains the most popular web browser in the world, so it has some weight behind it.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Every so often, web browsers need to be updated. The vital technologies that underpin the internet are always moving forward, so a new browser is required to make sure your experience is as current as possible. At the same time, new security vulnerabilities are being discovered. It's entirely possible that criminals could compromise your computer if you stick with old browser technology. New browser versions help to ensure that such attacks are not possible, so you should always try to keep up to date with the latest releases.

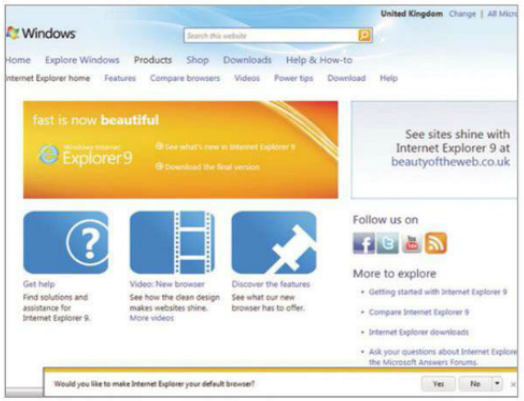
HOW DO I GET THE LATEST VERSION?

There are a couple of ways to do this. In your current web browser – it doesn't have to be Internet Explorer – you can go to http://ie.microsoft.com to be directed to a page containing the latest version of Internet Explorer. Click the drop-down box to select your version of Windows – either 64-bit or 32-bit. If you don't know which you're running, just click 'Which version do I have' for instructions on how to find out. Next click the blue 'Download now' link to download the installer and run the file that's downloaded.

Alternatively, you may have already received Internet Explorer 9 automatically. Microsoft has made it part of its Windows Update service, which delivers the latest important updates to your computer. To find out more about Windows Update, and to ensure that you have it switched on, click the 'Start' orb, and type **windows update** into the search box.

ANYTHING UNDER THE HOOD?

Many people have claimed that Internet Explorer 9 is a revelation in terms of speed. Previous versions had been losing ground to competitors such as Firefox and Google Chrome, but we're pleased to say that Internet Explorer 9 is a blisteringly quick browser – probably the fastest currently available. Microsoft has worked hard to optimise it, and it shows. It's also added a number of features that will only make sense to proper web developers, but which will make your experience on the internet a much richer and more rewarding one.



ALL YOU NEED Microsoft's Internet Explorer website at http://ie.microsoft.com has the latest version and there's lots of help at hand

HOW DO I INSTALL IT?

If you've downloaded the installer from the Microsoft website, you'll need to run it – find it quickly by typing **IE9** into the search box in the Start menu. Hit [Enter] to run the installer, then click 'Yes' if you're faced with a User Account Control message. The installer will likely need to close a number of programs if you have any open, so make sure you've saved any work before clicking 'Continue'. Once you've been told Internet Explorer 9 has been installed, we'd suggest restarting your computer as your next step. When your machine has booted back up, you'll find a link to Internet Explorer 9 in your Start menu, replacing any previous version of Internet Explorer you had installed. Run it, accept the default security settings and you're away.

STAY SAFE Accept Internet Explorer's default security settings on your first run – they'll help to protect you

FIND THE SOLUTION! *Which version do I have?*
To find out, just open IE, then press [F1] on your keyboard – the version is displayed on the help menu that pops up.

SO WHAT'S NEW?

The most immediate noticeable difference between IE9 and previous versions is a reduction in chrome. Tabs have been pushed up next to the address bar and other elements shuffled around to maximise the amount of screen space your web pages are given. Don't worry if you're already used to Internet Explorer 8, though – all of the functions and menus are still there. Searching might be a little harder to find, but just click the magnifying glass icon in the address bar and type your search in there to find what you're looking for.

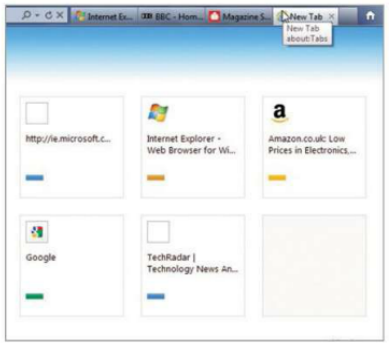
LET BING HELP Click 'Turn on suggestions' to allow Bing to help speed up your searches

"Internet Explorer 9 is a blisteringly quick browser – probably the fastest currently available"

WHAT MORE CAN I DO?

Try this new feature: pinned sites. Open Internet Explorer and go to a website you use often. Click and hold the left mouse button on the tab the site is open in, then drag and drop it to your desktop or the start menu. This creates a new icon that launches a special new instance of Internet Explorer just for that site. Or try this – hit [Ctrl] + [T] to open a new browser tab and you'll be shown a grid of the sites you use most frequently. Just click on any of them to go straight there.

QUICK JUMP IE9 shows a useful grid when you make a new tab, with bars showing how often you've visited your favourite sites



WILL DOWNLOADING BE EASIER?

Funny you should ask! Internet Explorer 9 comes with Microsoft's new Download Manager, a brilliant tool that looks after your every download. You can use it to pause a download before it's complete, to check files for possible malicious content before allowing them on to your computer, and much more. To see the Download Manager, click the tools icon (it looks like a little cog) then select 'View downloads'.

WILL IT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY NEW PC?

IE9 supports hardware acceleration, so if your PC is capable and if you have a 3D graphics card built in, you'll really see the benefits on the next generation of websites. It also has full support for HTML 5, which makes sites even more interactive than they were before. Microsoft offers a whole host of pages that will help you to test out these new features – point Internet Explorer at http://ie.microsoft.com/testdrive to find them.

IS INTERNET EXPLORER MY ONLY CHOICE?

Although IE9's improvements are huge, it's not the only browser out there. Mozilla Firefox is the second most popular browser and you can download it from www.getfirefox.com. At the time of writing it's at version 9, although don't put too much stock in the version number – just know that it's similarly up to date with web technologies. Google also produces a browser, called Chrome, which you can find at http://chrome.google.com. Realistically your choice of browser is going to be a personal one, and installing one doesn't mean you can't try the others. Why not check them all out and see which one you like best?

WHAT'S NEXT FOR INTERNET EXPLORER?

Internet Explorer 10 is already in development. It should be ready in time for the release of Windows 8, and will play a big part in its makeup. It's possible to try Internet Explorer 10 right now, but you'll need a technical mind and some foolhardy abandon. Go to http://dev.windows.com, download the Windows Developer Preview and install it on a spare PC – the version of Internet Explorer that comes with it is the very cutting edge. ■

Jargon buster!

64-bit/32-bit
To you there might not seem to be much of a difference, but the 64-bit version of Windows 7 can, in essence, handle larger numbers than the 32-bit version. This means it can address much more memory, which is a huge plus, although it also means some older programs are incompatible.

Chrome
The dressing around your program windows (menu bars, buttons, tabs and the like) is called chrome – not to be confused with Google's web browser, also called Chrome. There are two schools of thought: one says that easily accessible buttons and menus make programs easier to use and the other says that these elements should be tucked away so that the main body of the program can shine. We're in the latter camp.

Quickfire questions

Is Internet Explorer free?
Once upon a time, in the early days of the internet, web browsers were commercial products. Internet Explorer's first home release was as part of the Plus! pack for Windows 95, which was a paid add-on. Since then, though, it's been a free component of Windows, and it's very unlikely that a web browser will ever be anything other than free again.

Why can't I install IE9?
If you're struggling to upgrade to the latest version, there's probably a good reason why – it's because you're persisting with Windows XP. If this is indeed the case, we don't have any good news for you – you'll have to stick with IE8 until you upgrade your PC to one running Windows 7. Sorry!

Upgrade

▶ NEW HARDWARE ▶ LATEST SOFTWARE ▶ ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

Welcome

I love being able to work and play on my PC without being tied to a desk, and this month we looked long and hard at what you need to do this. For instance, we found the best laptops for carrying around without breaking your back, not to mention the bank. And while you're out and about, you'll need access to all your files – such as important documents, or photos of loved ones – so we've compared each of the different cloud storage facilities too. Finally, we give you an insight into the next generation of mobile internet, called 4G. It's going to be fast.

Nick Odantzis Deputy editor
nick.odantzis@futurenet.com

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Windows 8 release details, the inside knowledge of the 4G network, Q&A

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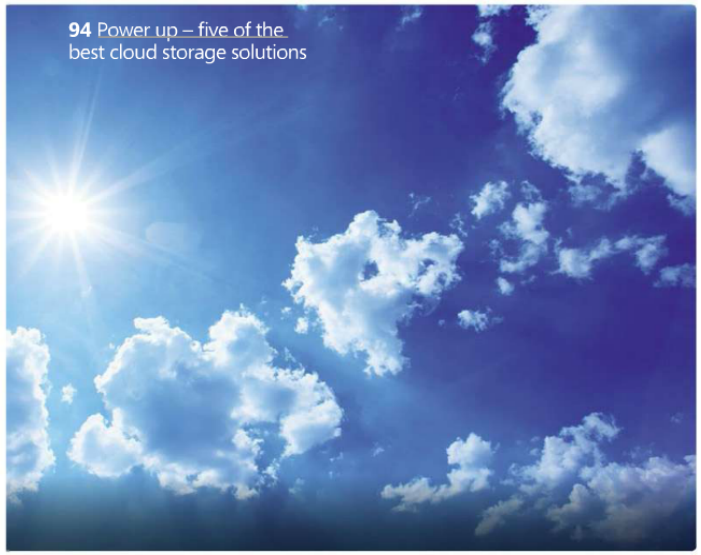
Asus Zenbook UX21, Netgear WN3000RP, ACRyan VEOLO and Nokia Lumia 800

96 The big test: six value-for-money laptops
Laptops that offer portability and performance at a price that's right

108 World of Windows: your guide to Microsoft add-ons
Discover the wide range of extra tools you can add to your Windows computer



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Upgrade
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"The ability to holo-call into groupmates' conversations from anywhere on the planet is liberating"
Turn to page 112

Our review guarantee

We use only acknowledged experts to review products, so you can use our ratings with full confidence to make your buying decision

How we review

One of the key tenets of our review philosophy is that hardware should be compared against like products wherever possible. It is only when you pit the finest products of a certain type against one another – at the same time – that you can really come up with a definitive verdict as to which is the very best in that category. The pace of development in computer hardware means that it is very difficult to compare scores from today with those from, say, six months ago. Magazines and websites that review a new product on its own run the risk of confusing or misleading.

We guarantee to test every piece of hardware rigorously and thoroughly, using only acknowledged experts to establish the worth of a product. We always review from the viewpoint of our readers; the day-to-day practicality and quality of a product is paramount.

Our awards...

Only the very finest products receive our Best On Test Award. These will have excellent marks for quality.

Our Best Value Award is given to products that quite simply represent the best value for your money.

RATING EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Superb ★★★★☆ Very good ★★★☆☆ Good ★★☆☆☆ Disappointing ★☆☆☆☆ Poor

Our promise to you...

The Upgrade section is your key to finding out about the latest products, all designed to help you get more from your PC

You can trust our reviews

Our expert reviewers are 100 per cent independent, with years of experience in the world of computing. Our rigorous testing procedures mean that only genuine, high-quality products are awarded high star ratings. Further, very few are handed our Best Value or Best on Test Awards. If you see an item of hardware bearing one of these marks, you can be confident that it is an excellent product. Always check when the award was given, to ensure it is still up-to-date.

We choose the best products

Thousands of new products for your computer are released every year and choosing between them can sometimes be an impossible task. Our experts select only the best hardware and software to feature in this magazine, making your decision on which one to choose easier. Even better, our awards and star rating system make it simple to find the best products for your needs, with our recommended products section giving you a fast, trustworthy guide to a wide range of hardware and software.

We'll introduce you to new stuff

Wherever we can, we review new hardware comparatively, pitching it head-to-head against other similar products. (Full details of our policy can be found in the opposite page, under 'Our review guarantee'.) Of course, this isn't always possible with new products and part of our duty to you is to introduce you a wide range of fascinating new hardware, software, services and games.

The reviews of standalone hardware and software are just as thorough as our comparative reviews. However, we do not allocate scores to them because this can often be misleading. The only exception to this rule is on our games reviews, where the pace of change is a lot slower and single scores can be genuinely useful.

Hardware news...

We reveal all the latest tech, gadgets, apps and more

WINDOWS 8 TABLETS SET FOR MID-2012

MORE DETAILS EMERGE ABOUT THE SUCCESSOR TO WINDOWS 7

We've shown you what Windows 8 has in store in our super-preview on page 26, but we're also finding out a lot more details about when it will be launched. A beta version of Microsoft's new operating system is due to be released in February 2012, meaning that the full launch will definitely happen later on in 2012. The Windows 8 Developer Preview is already out, but the public beta will bring the much anticipated operating system into the public domain for the first time.

When it will be on the shelves and available in laptops and tablets is still something of a mystery, though. As mentioned in our super-preview, it seems Nokia is one of the firms that will release a Windows 8 tablet. One of the company's French executives, Paul Amsellem, was recently speaking to newspaper *Le Echoes* about the tablet and said: "In June 2012, we will have a tablet that runs on Windows 8." Dell and HP are also reportedly prepping Windows 8 slates.

If the public beta lands in February, then Microsoft should be on track to launch in September or October, with an aim to make an immediate impact in the tablet and smartphone markets currently dominated by iOS and Android. PC transitions historically take longer, as global usage of Windows 7 only overtook XP in October 2011.

Staying up to date

Microsoft is also revamping its update system for Windows 8 and says it hopes to get down to just one update a month. Microsoft says that when they arrive you'll get three days' notice, which will appear as a reminder on the lock screen.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Twice as good?

According to *Digitimes*, HTC is looking at combining Chrome OS and Android for some kind of tablet or Chromebook device. It's not clear how this would work in practice, though.

Galaxy quest

Apple's claim of copyright infringement against Samsung's Galaxy Tab 10.1 has suffered a blow after a US judge declined an injunction. Apple's blocked the Galaxy in several countries.

Full colour

WHSmith has unveiled the £190 Kobo Vox, a 7-inch colour touchscreen ereader. Comparisons will be drawn with the Amazon Kindle Fire, also a 7-inch colour tablet.

Small is beautiful

LG has announced a new ultraportable laptop. The 13.3-inch Z330 joins LG's XNote family and has a start-up time of 9.9s. It's not sure when or if it will come to the UK.

INSIDER KNOWLEDGE

Chris Barraclough gives you the bigger picture on the 4G network, explaining what it will mean for data transfer speeds and when we can expect to see it here

4G NETWORK

You might have been hearing on the news that there's been a trial of 4G broadband in Cornwall. The trial is not just for mobile phone customers but also standard broadband users, making it a world first.

But what exactly is 4G? It's a new tech for our phones, laptops and tablets that will take data transfer speeds way beyond what we experience now over the current 3G mobile networks. In the US, 4G networks are already becoming available, largely because 3G hasn't been such a key technology stateside. 2011 has seen several companies unveil 4G mobile phones in the US designed specifically for next-generation 4G networks.

In tablets, Samsung announced an LTE-friendly version of the Galaxy Tab earlier this year, while the 10.1-inch HTC Jetstream (pictured) was also announced.

The bad news is that we're unlikely to get a sniff of a national 4G network in the UK any time soon. Ofcom – responsible for the sale of the additional spectrum – has said that any sale of 4G (fourth generation) licences will be delayed until the second quarter of 2012. Even if the auction manages to take place in the first half of 2012, we still won't see networks rolling the faster speeds out until 2013 at the earliest, putting the UK several years behind many areas of the US and Japan.

Q&A

Q I'VE HEARD NETBOOKS ARE RUBBISH FOR WEB BROWSING. IS THIS TRUE?

A **No, netbooks are perfectly good for web browsing and basic computing tasks such as writing letters or putting together a spreadsheet. However, they aren't so good at more processor-intensive tasks such as photo or video editing, gaming or watching high-quality video.**

Q WHAT IS ICE CREAM SANDWICH?

A **The codename of Google's latest version of Android. It'll be a free update for high-end Android phones and tablets in early 2012, and it's available to buy on the Samsung Galaxy Nexus.**

Q CAN I RUN WINDOWS OS ON A MACBOOK AIR?

A **You can run Windows on any new Mac. Although the capability to run Windows is present on the Mac when you get it, you will have to buy the actual copy of Windows.**

Q WHAT IS DEEP SLEEP?

A **Laptop sleep modes vary in the amount of power they draw from the battery – the laptop is still 'on'. Deep sleep modes reduce this, giving a longer battery life.**

Asus Zenbook UX21

£846 http://uk.asus.com

A powerful, small-form ultrabook for those with niche needs

By slashing the size of its ultrabook and retaining some top class technology, Asus managed to create the best netbook ever made. The diminutive keyboard won't suit everyone, but if you need to stay portable, there's no better laptop on the market right now.

When talking about ultrabooks, it's impossible not to make immediate comparisons with the MacBook Air, so let's deal with them now. The Zenbook UX21 matches the 11.6-inch MacBook Air in every respect, and is the perfect laptop for anyone looking for style and portability. It's just as well-built, at 1.2kg it's just as light, and oozes just as much style and class. It also has the same Intel Core i5 low voltage 1.6GHz processor and the same 128GB solid state hard drive, which helps to keep the system responsive and fast.

But, enough of the similarities. Not content to match its rival, the Zenbook UX21 also manages to eclipse the MacBook Air in two key areas – memory and price. Pleasingly, the UX21 comes with 4GB of RAM (whereas the Air is only equipped with 2GB), and it's £150 cheaper.

The Sandy Bridge processor scores well in our laboratory tests, and it's easily as fast as chips found on most mid-range laptops. The UX21 is fully capable of simultaneously handling such standard tasks as web browsing, picture editing and playing online video – including HD. Considering the UX21's waif-like looks, it's incredible that it's able to compete with bulky portables.

In terms of graphical performance, which defines the quality of games, video and programs such as Photoshop, the Zenbook doesn't stack up so well. There's no dedicated graphics card here, so the processor handles the 3D effects instead. There's enough power to watch hi-def movies and make simple edits to video, but hardcore graphics programs and even mid-range games test the system beyond its limits.

Battery life is good, and we achieved 189 minutes using our lab software. In real terms, you can expect around five hours of web surfing and writing before the UX21 needs charging. If you're away from the mains all day, then you might not consider five hours to be enough, but you'd have to look to the Acer Travelmate or Sony Z Series to get anywhere near the same power and portability as the UX21 – meaning a jump in weight and price. The Sony Z Series and its external power pack cost in excess of £2,600.

This UX21's aluminium body offers no flex, the lid rises smoothly from the body, the keys are tactile, comfortably spaced and, despite being on a netbook sized portable, comfortable to type on (though the reduced size did lead to more mistakes than a standard sized laptop). If you spend most of your day bashing out long documents, you would probably want to opt for the UX21's larger cousin, the UX31, or the excellent Acer Aspire S3, which is available for £699 for the Intel Core i5 model.

"Its keyboard won't suit everyone, but if you need to stay portable, there's no better laptop"

The screen is excellent, and it's one of the best panels we've seen in a small-form notebook. With the resolution equivalent to that of a larger 15-inch laptop, you can enjoy the likes of Word documents and web pages properly (unlike on a netbook, where the lower amount of pixels means that web pages look zoomed-in, prompting you to scroll every few lines).

Ideal travel companion

If you're a regular traveller who likes watching movies, the UX21 is perfect for your needs, as it has enough power to play back high definition video. The extra two inches over a tablet make all the difference too, making the UX21 a fantastic machine for those who mix work and play, while on the move.

One bugbear we have is with the trackpad. For an 11.6-inch laptop, it's well-sized and smooth, but it's also extremely sensitive. This can lead to some chaotic moments where clicks are registered accidentally, meaning that things are accidentally dragged. This is one area where the MacBook Air prevails, and its multitouch trackpad is smart enough to work out what you're trying to do and is seamlessly integrated with every part of the operating system.

The UX21's main problem is that few people would want to use it as their primary machine, due to the size and lack of connectivity. It therefore seems like an expensive addition to someone's portable arsenal, and less versatile than its sibling, the UX31.

If you're looking for a powerful 11-inch laptop, you need look no further, but those without niche needs would be better served with something larger. ■

Jargon buster

Netbook
A small-form laptop, with low power designed for basic tasks on the move.

Jargon buster

Low voltage
A processor that demands less power from the battery, which enables you to have faster speeds and better battery life.

TEST RESULTS

BATTERY LIFE (Mins) 189 — POOR GOOD EXCELLENT

PERFORMANCE — POOR GOOD EXCELLENT

GAMING — POOR GOOD EXCELLENT

KEY FEATURES

Asus Zenbook UX21

E-code 7RJ3Q200
Supplier www.dabs.com
Telephone N/A
Processor Intel Core i5-2467M (1.6GHz)
Memory 4GB
Storage 128GB SSD
Optical drive None
Screen size 11.6-inch
Display resolution 1366 x 768
Graphics card Intel HD 3000
Dimensions 297 x 196 x 17mm
Weight 1.2kg
Wireless LAN 802.11n
USB ports 2
OS Windows 7 Home Premium
Standard warranty 1 year C&R P&L

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★★★☆

SERIOUS ABOUT HARDWARE?

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PCFormat
PERFORMANCE GEAR & GAMING

ISSUE 262/FEBRUARY 2012

All the best kit reviewed

RIG MADNESS
FUTURE SHOCK
The amazing tech that will define the PC of tomorrow

NEXT-GEN GRAPHICS
"4.3 BILLION TRANSISTORS! THAT'S A GOOD NUMBER"
Latest details on AMD's Southern Islands GPUs

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Netgear WN3000RP

Boost the range of your wireless network with this Universal Wi-Fi Range Extender

Wireless networks can be fantastic, but their Achilles' heel is their limited range. Stray too far from your router and you'll soon be faced with a huge drop in speeds and stability, and finally no connection at all.

The Netgear WN3000RP Universal Wi-Fi Range Extender promises to alleviate these problems by connecting to your existing network and giving it a boost to reach further afield. Setting it up is easy – just plug it into a wall socket and use WPS (Wi-Fi Protected Setup) to connect your router to the extender by clicking the WPS button on each.

Its claim to being universal is true, for the most part – we had no problems connecting this up to a non-Netgear router. WPS support can be somewhat flaky with some older routers, however, and without WPS, set-up is a slightly longer affair, because you'll need to connect a computer directly to the extender's wireless network.

Deciding where to place the extender is an inexact science. You need to find a spot where your existing Wi-Fi network's range begins to wane – but it still needs to receive enough signal to boost it. The Netgear Universal Wi-Fi Range Extender doesn't offer much help in this regard, so installation may be a case of trial and error.

It doesn't help that a strange design choice has resulted in the extender's body being situated below the plug socket. This could be awkward to install if your home's plug sockets are close to the floor.

The Netgear WN3000RP Universal Wi-Fi Range Extender does what it claims to: it extends a wireless network that it's attached to. But there are a few design choices that sometimes make this device frustrating to use. ■

The Netgear WN3000RP Universal Wi-Fi Range Extender can be difficult to install correctly

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★★☆☆

Key features

Price £62
Info www.netgear.com

Key features
Extends range of any wireless router or gateway, no CD or Ethernet cable required, WPA/WPA2/WEP encryption

ACRyan VEOLO

An old version of the Android operating system hobbles this media streamer

Digital entertainment specialist ACRyan has been turning out increasingly brilliant network media streamers for the last few years. As such we were excited when we opened the Android-equipped VEOLO's box. It's a sleek, stylish box, perfect for sitting smartly by your HDTV.

And then we realised it was running Android 2.2. This is an old version of the OS and one which didn't win friends when it appeared on early phones and tablets.

The first line of the VEOLO feature list gave us hope: 'Internet TV web browser, with HTML5, Adobe Flash and Chrome V8 JavaScript support.' But despite this claim, Flash definitely does not work – unless your definition of 'working' means playing iPlayer content for 15 seconds before crashing the browser. None of the online video providers worked with either the stock browser or the generally Flash-happy Dolphin HD, and only the most basic of website animations actually functioned.

It's a shame – there are some decent points of interest in the VEOLO, but the operating system completely hobbles it in terms of web content. The video playback is excellent – it happily zipped through different 1080p MKV files straight from a network hub. There was no issue skipping through movies or with different subtitle formats. The controller is almost a winner too, riffing on the simplicity of the Boxee Box's dual-sided remote. It's got Nintendo Wii-like functionality too, allowing you to wave it around to control the on-screen cursor. Unfortunately it's not particularly well made, with sharp edges and awkwardly placed buttons.

But that's as good as it gets. We were hoping for a device to marry web TV with ACRyan's strong offerings in the network media player department. It could have been the death knell for the media PC. Sadly though, this device manages to make for an incredibly unpleasant user experience. Avoid like a low-rent Android tablet. ■

The ACRyan VEOLO is let down badly by an outdated OS

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★☆☆☆

Key features

Price £180
Info www.acryan.com

Key features
1GHz ARM Cortex-A9 processor, Android 2.2, 512MB DDR3 RAM, 4GB internal storage HDMI 1.3, stereo and SPDIF optical outputs

Nokia Lumia 800

£470 www.nokia.com/gb-en/

Nokia's return to form, thanks to Windows Phone 7

Nokia's smartphone output so far has been plagued by the ugly and out-of-date Symbian operating system, but that's all changed with the release of the Lumia 800 handset, rocking Windows Phone 7 instead. The clean and simple interface is a perfect complement to the phone's luxurious feel, making this an excellent handset for smartphone newcomers and connoisseurs alike.

The Lumia fits perfectly in your hand or a pocket, and we liked the attractive design – featuring flat top and bottom edges and a curved front-end – on first sight. The glass is quite thick but the touchscreen controls are responsive to prods and swipes. Every part of this phone feels reassuringly solid without weighing you down, and Nokia has thrown in a rubber cover to protect the glossy chassis from keys, pavements and other mortal enemies.

Although the 3.7-inch screen is dwarfed by the likes of the HTC Titan and Samsung Galaxy Note, we found it a good size for browsing the web or enjoying a TV show. We were especially impressed by the excellent viewing angles and rich colours, lending your digital photos a realistic appearance. The display is also bright enough to comfortably use outside, so you won't be squinting as you compose a text.

The rest of the phone features a minimalist design, with a covered mini-USB port for charging and transferring files. Do bear in mind that the Lumia takes a Micro-SIM card, so you'll need to contact your provider if you're using a standard-sized SIM card. There's no Micro SD slot to expand the 16GB of storage, however this is enough room to carry thousands of songs or photographs with you. You also get 25GB of online storage for free, through Microsoft's SkyDrive service.

We found the Windows Phone 7 operating system very easy to pick up and use. A single desktop can be populated with your favourite apps, including maps, contacts and a web browser. These are represented as living tiles, which update regularly – for example, the shortcut to your photo gallery displays an ever-changing slideshow of your pictures.

If you love social networking, the Lumia offers a great way to stay in touch with friends. You can set up Facebook, Twitter and email accounts and see what your contacts are up to at any time, as well as posting up your own photos and comments.

Music lovers will enjoy Nokia's music app, which not only plays your MP3s, but can stream music from your chosen genre for free. If you hear a song you love, you can buy it instantly. You can also browse local gigs, a great feature if you're feeling spontaneous and fancy catching some live music.

Nokia Maps is only in its beta phase (ie, still a work in progress), but what we've seen is promising. We found our location instantly and you can also search the area you're in for local services such as restaurants. Things slowed down when searching, but hopefully this issue will be fixed by the next update. You also get an excellent 'Nokia Drive' app, which turns your phone into a sat nav.

Unfortunately, the Windows Phone Apps Marketplace is a little barren at the moment. Essential Android apps such as BBC iPlayer and Skype aren't present, and you have limited games too. Give it time and we're sure things will improve, but app fans are best sticking to other operating systems.

Snap happy

Rounding off the features is an 8MP camera with flash. Daylight photos are sharp and vivid, although shots in darkened interiors tend to be fuzzier with weak colours, even with the flash enabled. At least you have a dedicated camera button on the edge of the Lumia, which opens the photo app as well as taking snaps. You can also shoot VGA or 720p video.

The smartphone's performance is solid, on the whole, with the single-core processor coping with every game and app we tried. However, the battery frequently died in under 24 hours, even with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth disabled. This is noticeably quicker than most recent handsets we've tried. We had to turn on the 'Battery Saver' option, which disables mail and other updates when the battery hits 20 per cent, to ensure we got through a full day.

Smartphone virgins – as well as veterans – should seriously consider the Lumia 800, with its simple-yet-enjoyable interface and sleek, minimalist design. It isn't a perfect device, admittedly, as the lack of dedicated apps is a bit of an issue, but we'd happily use this phone every day. Welcome back Nokia – we missed you. ■

"Every part of this luxurious smartphone feels reassuringly solid without weighing you down"

Jargon buster

Windows Phone 7
The latest version of Microsoft's smartphone OS is 7.5, nicknamed Mango. Don't get confused between Windows 7 and Windows Phone 7 – the two are very different, and Windows Phone 7 has a streamlined interface that's ideal for use on devices that have a touchscreen.

Jargon buster

Skype
This web-based application has been around for a while, but is still one of the best and most popular methods for conducting video chats with friends and family. Skype is free to download and install, and setting up an account is quick and simple. Once complete, you can make free calls to any other Skype user.

TEST RESULTS

KEY FEATURES

Nokia Lumia 800

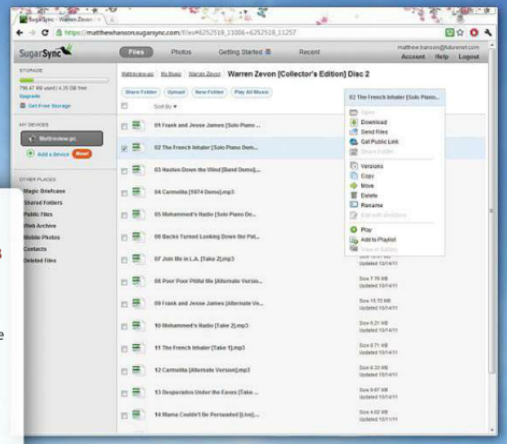
E-Code N/A
Supplier www.carphonewarehouse.com
Telephone 0870 087 0870
OS Windows Phone 7
Processor Qualcomm single-core 1.4GHz
Internal storage 16GB
Expansion None
RAM 512MB
Connectivity Micro USB
Camera 8MP
Front camera None
Weight 155g
Screen size 3.7-inch
Screen type Capacitive
Screen resolution 480 x 800

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★★☆

CLOUD STORAGE

Use these programs to store your files and folders online and access them on any PC.
By Matt Hanson

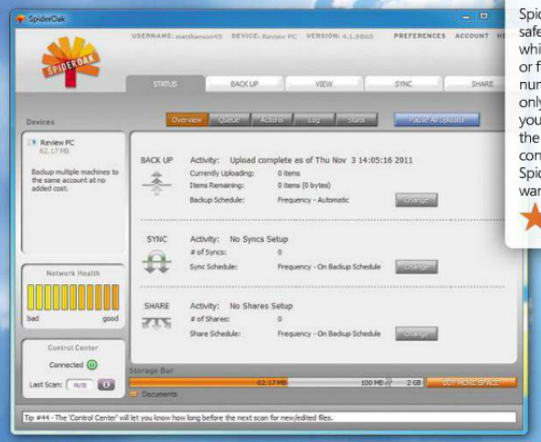


SugarSync

Price 5GB free, 30GB $50 a year, 500GB $400 a year (www.bit.ly/rwrHVT) (www.sugarsync.com)

SugarSync offers a free 5GB account. Thereafter, the more space you buy, the better the value. Creating an account is quick and easy. After selecting a name and icon for our primary PC, we were asked to select the folders and subfolders to synchronise. Files and folders not only appear on any device you've synchronised, you can also access them through your web browser.

★★★★★



SpiderOak

Price 2GB free, $10 per extra 100GB per month (https://spideroak.com/pricing) (https://spideroak.com)

SpiderOak focuses on keeping your data safe. It uses 'zero knowledge' security, which means its staff can't see any folder or file names – all they can see are numbered data blocks. Your password is only stored on your computer, keeping your files completely secure. However, the desktop program's interface is confusing to use. When considering SpiderOak, ask yourself whether you want simplicity or security.

★★★☆☆

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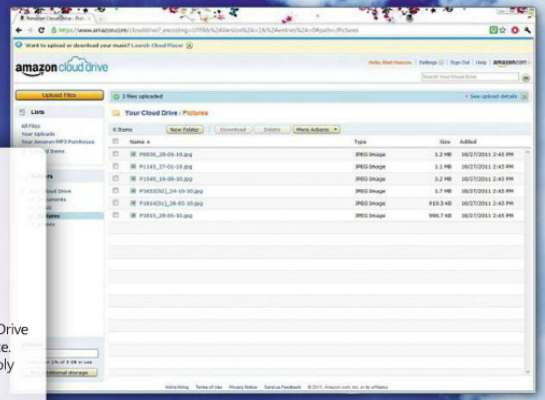
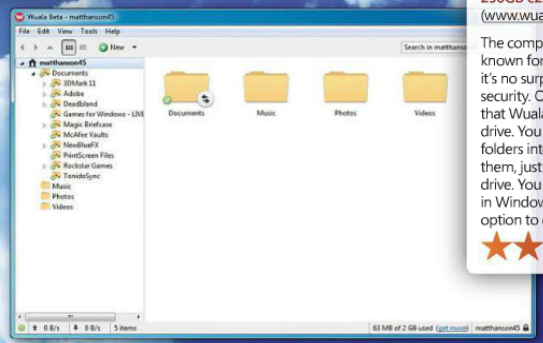


Amazon Cloud Drive

5GB free, then 20GB $20 a year up to 1TB $1,000 a year (http://amzn.to/tvE09F) (www.amazon.com/clouddrive)

The free version of Amazon Cloud Drive comes with a generous 5GB of space. Signing up for the service is incredibly simple because it ties in with your existing Amazon account – all you need to do is log in. You can choose which folder to upload the files to, and additional storage is available for a very reasonable price.

★★★☆☆

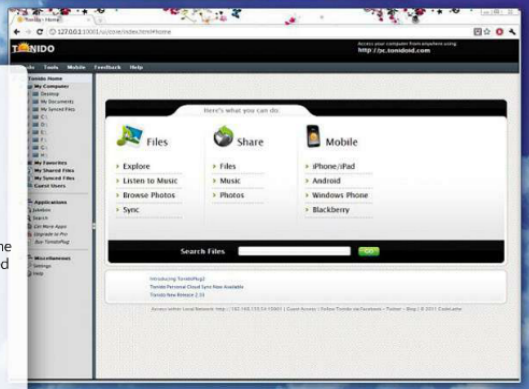


Wuala

Price 2GB free, 10GB €19, 25GB €39, 250GB €229 (www.bit.ly/u6L57h) (www.wuala.com)

The company behind Wuala is well known for its external hard drives, so it's no surprise that Wuala focuses on security. One particularly nice feature is that Wuala mounts itself as a network drive. You can drag and drop files and folders into the drive to synchronise them, just as you would a normal hard drive. You can also right-click on any file in Windows and select the 'Send to' option to copy the file directly to Wuala.

★★★★☆



Tonido

Free storage, $119 for TonidoPlug hardware, $30 per year for TonidoPro (https://store.tonido.com) (www.tonido.com)

When you create a new Tonido account, you're given a tonidoid.com domain name. You can use this to access your PC and all the files on it from any other internet-connected computer using a web browser. Tonido's main selling point is its flexibility. You can customise the software with extra apps. For example, the Jukebox app lets you play music from your remote computer.

★★★★☆

The big test...

MORE FOR YOUR MONEY

Six laptops that offer a mix of performance and portability without costing the earth

Picking out a new laptop can be a bewildering experience and one that's not helped by the plethora of deals, special offers and bonuses that you can find both on the high street and around the internet. And while clearance listings or seasonal offers can be enticing, you can't be sure the shiny laptops on show are going to be right for your needs. There's no point saving money on components you're never going to need or paying less for a stripped-down machine when a little bit of extra cash would have made a big difference.

We've rounded up some of the best value-for-money laptops available right now which – sale or not – will offer you a mix of power and portability. We've avoided both the cheapest budget models and the sky-high premium machines for this test, focusing instead on laptops offering the right balance and longevity to see you comfortably through the next couple of years.

On test

ACER
ASPIRE 5749
£399

Acer keeps coming back for more with another reasonable budget machine

DELL
INSPIRON 14Z
£579

An attractive machine that manages to do most things right

FUJITSU
LIFEBOOK AH530
£359

A perfectly capable machine that, while uninspiring, offers good value for money

LENOVO
Z570
£550

A lesser-known brand delivers a laptop that offers a great balance of value and performance

SONY
VAIO VPCEH2F1E
£500

A reassuring and well-made everyday laptop with a standout keyboard

TOSHIBA
SATELLITE C660
£339

Cheap laptop where poor build quality detracts from performance

Acer Aspire 5749

£399 www.acer.co.uk

Keeping up with Acer is some task. The Taiwanese company is now one of *the* laptop manufacturers to be reckoned with. Its Aspire 5749 is another fine example of advanced features in a budget package.

From the outside, the laptop is uninspiring. Like many Aspires, Acer has concentrated less on the outward design and more on the technology inside. The light grey chassis is covered with a design that looks not unlike a sheet of metal flooring. But at 2.3kg, the Aspire 5749 is lighter than your average laptop.

There is a slight amount of flex around the edges of the keyboard, but this is minimal. The keyboard itself sticks resolutely to Acer's previous models. Each key is individually raised above the chassis, which makes for comfortable typing, but crumbs and dirt may easily find their way under the keys.

The touchpad is nicely sized and located further to the left than on other machines. The two click buttons are melded together as two halves of the same button, while a small section on the right of the touchpad acts as a virtual scroll bar. It's a nice feature you might find yourself using often after a few experimental flicks.

Vast storage

Acer has seen fit to include 750GB of storage space – a generous amount. Even though you can buy external hard drives, it's always reassuring to have plenty of room to install programs and back up data on your native drive.

Power comes courtesy of an Intel Core i3-2330M processor. It's pretty standard for this type of laptop, but manages to kick out a decent amount of power without costing the earth.

Graphical ability is mediocre thanks to an integrated Intel card. You shouldn't have a problem photoshopping your image collection or running hi-def movies, but you'll probably want to hold off on ordering *Modern Warfare 3* for now.

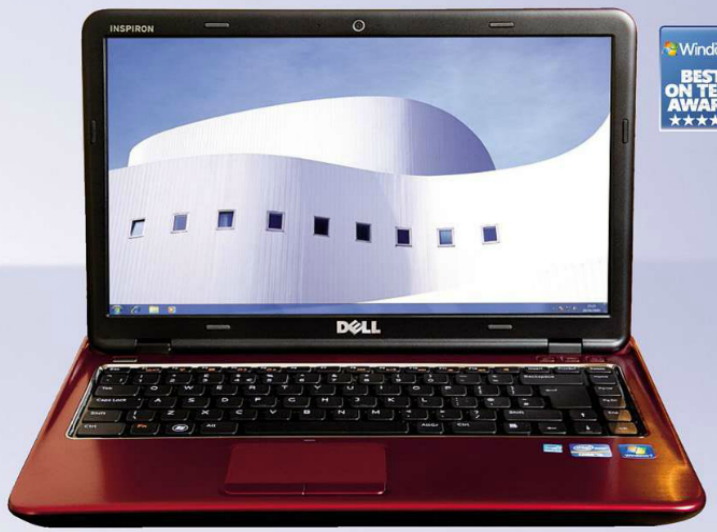
If you do want to dabble with multimedia then you'll find this Acer's 15.6-inch screen is quite accommodating. It's not as bright as we've seen on other laptops, but there's a Super-TFT coating that is always welcome when watching films.

Three USB ports, an HDMI and VGA port and an Ethernet socket make up the connections on offer here. The Acer Aspire 5749 comes with 802.11n wireless connectivity, but there's no Bluetooth support for wirelessly connecting peripherals.

There's enough speed, thanks to 4GB of RAM, which should be the minimum amount you look for when buying a laptop. It lagged when streaming hi-def video from the internet with several programs running in the background. But overall it's a comfortably reliable and smooth performance.

Judging by the manufacturer's track record, if you decide to shell out on the Aspire 5749, you can rest assured there'll be a newer model out next week. But that shouldn't matter too much. This is a solidly built, value-for-money performer with plenty of storage space, even if its design leaves plenty to be desired.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★★★☆



Windows The Official Magazine BEST ON TEST AWARD ★★★★★

Dell Inspiron 14z

£579 www.dell.co.uk

There is plenty to like about the Dell Inspiron 14z. The metallic red colour (costing an extra £10, but definitely worth it), 2.1kg weight, comfortable keyboard and curvy design all strike you as soon as you pick it up. Furthermore, it has the right mix of power and price, thanks to the mid-range Sandy Bridge processor and 4GB memory. Some minor niggles stop it achieving solid gold status but overall we're very impressed.

The Inspiron 14z is gorgeous to look at. A metallic, fire-red colour makes it instantly recognisable and the brushed aluminium finish affords it premium status. Dell is all about the slim and light this year and the Inspiron 14z is no exception – weighing only 2.1kg with a 14-inch screen, this laptop is made for portability. Strangely, there's a protruding ridge underneath the laptop coming from the battery that easily adds half an inch of thickness to an otherwise very slim chassis. The plus side is an ever-so-slightly inclined typing angle, so it's not all bad.

Attractive keyboard

Speaking of typing, the Inspiron 14z gives you an isolation-style keyboard with cutesy rounded keys that are comfortable to use. This is a condensed keyboard – there's no numeric keypad – but it's better than trying to cram too much onto too small a space.

Unfortunately, usability is let down somewhat by the touchpad: it's not particularly responsive and suffers from left- and right-click buttons that are too heavy. The cursor also has a tendency to lock into the scroll bar at the slightest provocation, which is annoying.

While the smaller screen is ideal for portability, purists may prefer a 15.6-inch laptop for enjoying multimedia content. Also, the Inspiron 14z's screen isn't one of the brightest we've seen. There's no lack of detail or colour reproduction but we have to admit that an immersive movie experience isn't this laptop's strong point. If you want to play hi-def content you can, although you'll have to stop short of 1080p resolution and content yourself with the more modest 720p.

Performance wise, the Inspiron 14z doesn't go the whole hog with a Core i7 processor, opting for a less powerful second generation Core i5 2430M chip instead. The result is a supremely powerful laptop at a price that still appeals. And, while you don't want less than 4GB RAM, you don't really need more either. In short, this laptop will handle all of your needs – from basic editing to web surfing – without eating too much into your savings.

On top of that, the Inspiron 14z has a very impressive battery life. Dell has been keen to stress the portability of this machine and has made sure you can get a decent amount of use from it between charges. We ran the high-powered Battery Eater program over a looped high-definition video and scored the Dell at 232 minutes – an extremely respectable result.

There were one or two niggling flaws that got in the way during prolonged use, but owning a laptop of this quality for under £600 is a fantastic deal that shouldn't be missed.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★★★☆

Fujitsu Lifebook AH530

£359 www.laptopsdirect.co.uk

The Fujitsu Lifebook AH530 is a perfectly capable machine that will offer basic users the experience they're looking for at a bargain price. We can't help but notice its shortcomings – such as battery life – when compared with some of the other machines on test, so we'd only recommend it if you're on a strict budget.

The design is unremarkable but sufficient. There's a glossy black shine to the plastic lid that looks good but may prove susceptible to grubby marks and scratches. The polished black design continues inside, where it's been applied to the palm rest. Even though we weren't enamoured with the design, it feels solidly built, with very little flex around the keyboard or the optical drive.

The standard keyboard fails to compete with the likes of the Sony E Series but there is a surprising amount of travel on the keys that makes typing more comfortable than you'd think from looking at it. There's also a dedicated numeric keypad to the right of the main keyboard but it's small and slightly cramped. That's nothing compared to the touchpad though, which is almost comically tiny and quite difficult to use.

The 15.6-inch widescreen display is bright and just as sharp as other screens on laptops at this price. Images are well-reproduced, although some colours (particularly reds and oranges) appear a little washed out. The screen boasts a pixel resolution of 1366 x 768 and is perfectly suitable for watching 720p high-definition, although you'll need to look elsewhere for full 1080p graphics.

We were pleasantly surprised to see that Fujitsu has given the Lifebook AH530 an expansive 500GB of onboard storage space, while the more expensive Sony VAIO E Series could only manage 320GB. If you're planning on getting rid of your DVD collection in favour of downloadable content, you'll have space for much more with this laptop.

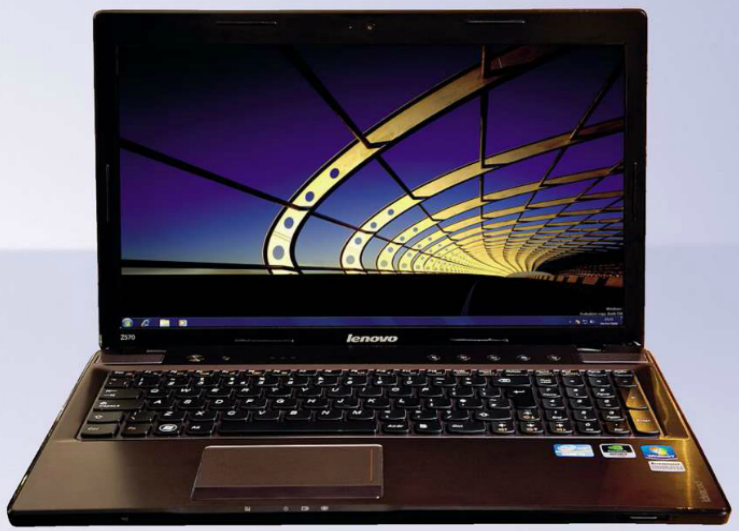
Dated processor

On most new laptops you'll now find a second-generation Intel processor (identifiable by the number '2' in front of the processor number). However, this Fujitsu is armed with an older, cheaper, first-gen Core i3 processor. This won't perform as well as the later models, and the score thrown out during our benchmarking tests reinforces that fact. But considering this laptop isn't aimed at heavy-duty users who crave extra power, we don't think the older processor is too much of a problem. We had several web pages open, music playing and a couple of word documents on the go at once and didn't have any trouble switching between them.

It also has an impressive 4GB of memory – about the minimum you should be looking for. It's not short on connectivity either, boasting 802.11n Wi-Fi (the fastest available), Bluetooth, three USB ports, and HDMI and VGA connections for external monitors.

This is a well-rounded laptop that offers great value for money. Apart from the touchpad and battery life, there's little to fault, as both its performance and design are suitable for the basic user.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★★☆☆



Lenovo Z570

£550 www.saveonlaptops.co.uk

Although popular with the business community, thanks to its ThinkPad range, Lenovo isn't yet a household name in the UK. However, fresh from its consumer-based IdeaPad stable comes the Lenovo Z570, which manages to hit a great balance between power and price.

There's something about the faint, almost purple tinge to the brushed metal exterior that looks a lot better than the basic black designs offered by other laptops in this test. The metal is only an overlay, set into a plastic chassis, but it's enough to make it stand out. Only the Dell Inspiron 14z betters it for looks.

Inside, the purple colouring is offset with Lenovo's traditional black keyboard and several backlit hotkeys. Two rectangular speaker grills are present below the screen hinges, which are themselves buried into the chassis.

The 15.6-inch screen is covered with a Super-TFT coating for extra colour depth and isn't interrupted by a particularly thick bezel. It does wobble slightly on its hinges, although viewing angles are very good. Because of the Super-TFT coating, however, the screen is reflective and in bright light it's quite noticeable.

The Z570 has the same 1366 x 768 pixel resolution as its rivals, so although 1080p video is out of reach, you can still watch 720p high definition from sites such as iPlayer.

Using the keyboard is a pleasant experience – providing you don't use the return key too often. Lenovo shrinks this key to a fraction of its usual size, which we find particularly irritating. While it doesn't beat the Sony VAIO VPCEH2F1E's keyboard, typing on the Z570 is still easy thanks to the well-rounded keys and plenty of space between buttons. The touchpad is large and well-placed and the extra hotkeys controlling volume, thermal management and video mode are a nice extra feature.

When it comes to connectivity, this laptop matches any of the other machines here, boasting three USB ports as well as an eSata port that doubles as a fourth USB. There are both HDMI and VGA ports for connecting to an external monitor as well as an Ethernet port and a 5-in-1 SD card slot for expanding on the 750GB of storage space. A DVD-RW optical drive lets you burn your own data or media discs for backup.

Graphical power

In our benchmarking tests, the Lenovo Z570 posted the best scores and also has some impressive specs on board. The Intel Core i5 CPU is part of Intel's Sandy bridge family and the Z570 is the only machine to come with a dedicated graphics card. The Nvidia GeForce GT520M adds an extra 1GB of pure video memory to the 6GB of standard RAM and lets you play basic games or run graphically intensive programs such as editing suites.

We expected the extra graphical power to suck up more battery power, but this laptop lasted a solid 173 minutes – the second best battery life in the test. Overall, it constitutes an extremely solid upgrade.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★★★☆

Sony VAIO VPCEH2F1E

£500 www.packardbell.co.uk

We approach budget laptops from Sony with caution. The Japanese giant may have produced some of the most desirable high-end machines out there, but its budget offerings have always been a mixed bag. Thankfully, using the Sony VAIO VPCEH2F1E is a reassuring experience. The keyboard and screen are both fantastic, and although the power tucked inside isn't mind-blowing, it's certainly enough for most users.

When it comes to appearance, the E Series is the ugly duckling of the VAIO family. It goes for the traditional all-black look (or white, pink or blue), but tries to mix it up with a textured triangle design that overlays the plastic. Questionable design aside, the chassis does feel firm and we couldn't find any flex around the usual weak spots, such as above the DVD drive or around the screen hinges. It's not exactly light at 2.4kg, but you'll easily be able to put this laptop in a backpack and carry it around for a day.

The highlight of the E Series is definitely the firm, isolation-style keyboard. Even though this is a budget machine, Sony has installed a highly usable keyboard that is a typist's dream. There's a great deal of space between the keys, as well as a dedicated numeric keypad and the three Assist, Web and VAIO hotkeys that Sony puts on all its models. Typing is particularly easy: the keys have a solid weight to them, and the added space means there's no chance of a miss-hit. If we had to gripe, we'd say that the slightly raised keys could fall victim to dust, crumbs and other debris spilt over the chassis and that the touchpad is too small.

This laptop's screen is also worth touching on. It's reasonably bright and pictures came out clear and detailed – if a little whiter than others in this test with darker displays. What we did like is that the screen runs almost to the edge of the lid, giving you the impression you're looking at a screen larger than 15.6 inches.

Average power

You won't be loading up the latest games, mixing HD video or doing a lot of visual programming on the VPCEH2F1E. However, the Core i3 processor is still a second-generation model, so will allow you to multitask with different programs and during intensive tasks we noted that it stayed both cool and quiet and that the battery gave us an average 173-minute life. The keyboard will find favour with writers, and the screen and speakers make watching movies a pleasant experience.

If you want to add an extra monitor, a better keyboard or more storage, you can do so thanks to the number of connections available, which include four USB ports, HDMI, VGA and Ethernet connections, as well as an SD Card slot and a Pro Duo slot. Additionally, Sony has built-in 802.11n wireless and Bluetooth.

It's not hard to recommend this laptop as a good deal. It gets so many of the fundamentals right without feeling the need to shunt in excess power, which adversely affects battery life and price. It's good to see a Sony VAIO laptop that the average person can afford and that gets the job done.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★★★☆

Toshiba Satellite C660

£339 www.samsung.com/uk

Some of Toshiba's laptops are truly fantastic pieces of kit. This isn't one of them. It's a long way off. The overall build quality feels cheap and although the performance and screen will satisfy basic users, we still recommend you steer well clear.

The entire machine is a black plastic construction. Although Toshiba has added a dimpled texture pattern, it can't disguise the fact that this is a budget laptop. The impression of cheapness isn't helped by the flex around the chassis, which is worst around the touchpad and the optical drive. The hinges don't feel strong, either, and the screen wobbles significantly after being adjusted.

Inside the laptop, the keyboard is packed in tightly with little travel and is slightly cramped in places – like with the diminutive return key. There is a dedicated numeric keypad to the right of the main keyboard, although there are no hotkeys anywhere on the chassis. Unfortunately, typing on the keyboard is affected by the flex and poor build quality that results in a rattle during use.

Further proof of the cheaper build quality lies in the slender connectivity on offer. There are just a paltry pair of USB ports, and although Toshiba has provided the user with a VGA connection, you won't find an HDMI port for a high-definition connection to an external monitor. The manufacturer has included a 5-in-1 SD card slot, however, for expanding on the 320GB of storage space with a variety of formats, plus a DVD writer for burning your discs.

Decent screen

Despite the poor build quality, we found the screen bright and suited to watching movies, thanks to the glossy Super-TFT coating. Even though the coating is reflective, we didn't find brightly lit environments as much of a problem with the C660 as we have encountered with other machines in this group test.

The 1366 x 768 pixel resolution keeps your photos and videos looking crisp, and the average 320GB hard drive will give you a sufficient amount of space to store your media on.

The Satellite Pro C660 is built around a first-generation Intel Core i3 dual core processor. As expected, this laptop performed poorly compared with others in this group test equipped with more recent specifications.

The graphics card is an integrated Intel chip that reduces any kind of video game to the equivalent of a PowerPoint presentation. The laptop's 4GB of RAM is noticeable, and we found that programs loaded up quickly and the C660 is competent at keeping a few different programs running at once.

Unfortunately, the lower power of the C660 doesn't result in a better battery life. We ran it through our tests and it limped along with a pretty poor result.

Regardless of what you plan to use your laptop for, you should be looking to get at least two or three years from your purchase. The Toshiba Satellite Pro C660 feels out of date now – poor build quality overshadows everything. For the price, we would recommend the Acer 5749 or Lenovo Z570 as alternatives.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★☆☆☆

Laptop specifications

All the technical information you need

NAME						
MANUFACTURER	Acer	Dell	Fujitsu	Lenovo	Sony	Toshiba
MODEL	Aspire 5749	Inspiron 14Z	Lifebook AH530	Z570	Vaio VPCEH2F1E	Satellite Pro C660
DETAILS						
PRICE	£399 (inc. VAT)	£579 (inc. VAT)	£359 (inc. VAT)	£550 (inc. VAT)	£500 (inc. VAT)	£339 (inc. VAT)
E-CODE	LX.RR702.011	N00IN7415	VFY:AH530MRSC2GB	M55SHUK	VPCEH2F1EB	PSCORE-01K01MEN
DELIVERY	Free	Free	£5	Free	£5	Free
SUPPLIER	www.saveonlaptops.co.uk	www.dell.com/uk	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	www.saveonlaptops.co.uk	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	www.saveonlaptops.co.uk
PHONE	0121 20 200 50	0844 444 3225	0871 971 0081	0121 20 200 50	0871 971 0081	0121 20 200 50
SPECIFICATIONS						
PROCESSOR	Intel Core I3-2330M 2.2GHz	Intel Core i5-2430M 2.40 GHz	Intel Core i3 M370 2.4GHz	Intel Core i5-2410M 2.3GHz	Intel Core i3 2330M 2.20GHz	Intel Core i3 370M 2.4GHZ
MEMORY	4GB	4GB	4GB	6GB	4GB	4GB
STORAGE	750GB	500GB	500GB	750GB	320GB	320GB
PRICE OF EXTRA BATTERY	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SCREEN SIZE & TYPE	15.6-inch Super-TFT	14-inch Super-TFT	15.6-inch Super-TFT	15.6-inch Super-TFT	15.6-inch Super-TFT	15.6-inch Super-TFT
NATIVE RESOLUTION (PIXELS)	1366 x 768	1366 x 768	1366 x 768	1366 x 768	1366 x 768	1366 x 768
GRAPHICS ADAPTER	Intel HD 3000	Intel HD 3000	Intel GMA	Nvidia GeForce GT520M	Intel HD 3000	Intel HD Graphics
OPTICAL DRIVE	DVD RW	DVD RW	DVD	DVD RW	DVD	DVD RW
OPERATING SYSTEM	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium
BASIC WARRANTY	1 Year C&R P&L	1 Year C&R P&L	1 Year C&R P&L	1 Year C&R P&L	1 Year C&R P&L	1 Year C&R P&L
DIMENSIONS (W x H x D)	381 x 255 x 35mm	381 x 255 x 35mm	380 x 252 x 35mm	377 x 250 x 33mm	370 x 250 x 40mm	381 x 255 x 41mm
WEIGHT	2.3kg	2.1kg	2.5kg	2.6kg	2.4kg	2.4kg
PORTS						
MEDIA CARDS	2-in-1	4-in-1	SD Card	5-in-1	2-in-1	5-in-1
BLUETOOTH	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
USB	3	3	3	4	4	2
DISPLAY	VGA, HDMI	HDMI, DisplayPort	VGA, HDMI	VGA, HDMI	VGA, HDMI	VGA
BUNDLED SOFTWARE	Various Acer applications	Various Dell applications	Various Fujitsu applications	Various Lenovo applications	Various Sony applications	Various Toshiba applications
INTEGRATED CAMERA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ADDITIONAL EXTRAS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TEST RESULTS						
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
FEATURES & BUILD	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
OVERALL	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
COMMENTS						
	Acer keeps coming back for more with another reasonable budget machine	An attractive laptop that almost manages to do everything right	A perfectly capable machine that, while uninspiring, offers good value for money	A lesser-known brand delivers a laptop that offers a great balance of performance and value	A reassuring and well-made everyday laptop complete with a standout keyboard	A disappointing laptop where poor build quality detracts from performance

The winner: Dell Inspiron 14Z

Find out more about the laptops that swayed us

The Dell Inspiron 14z is the clear winner in this test. This laptop is supremely portable and its performance and battery life, as you can see from the lab test results below, are exceptionally strong. The metallic red chassis also looks fantastic. Admittedly, you'll have to shell out an extra tenner to get it, but we feel it's well worth it to achieve that 'wow factor' when you're out and about. After all, it's not often you can get a laptop that turns heads for under £1,000.

Build quality is solid and light. There are several nice touches, such as dust covers over all the ports to stop dirt getting in and messing with the circuits. Our only complaint is the regrettably sub-standard touchpad – not usually a problem for Dell.

One benefit of buying the Inspiron 14z from Dell's own website is that you get the option to customise your order. You can choose to add or remove components depending on what you plan to use the machine for.

The smaller screen and 232-minute battery life will certainly appeal if you primarily want to use this laptop on the go, but its Intel Core i5 processor and 4GB of RAM are also plenty of power for running the majority of programs or browsing the web. One of the best bargains you'll find.

> "A clear winner – performance and battery life are exceptionally strong, and it looks absolutely fantastic"

Runner-up

LENOVO Z570

If it's value you're after, then the best choice by far is the Lenovo Z570. It looks just as pretty as our winner, the Dell Inspiron 14z and, while it's not as portable – or comes with as good a battery – it makes up for it by offering more power and plenty of features at a cheaper price.

The keyboard may take some getting used to and the chassis is significantly heavier than the Inspiron 14z, but the Z570's specifications means it's a good long-term purchase.

You'll also find the larger storage space and extra memory will come in handy as you start to fill your laptop with media and programs. Laptops inevitably slow down, but the extra grunt under the hood of this machine should keep it going longer than the other laptops we featured here.

If you're into your video games, the Lenovo is your best choice because of the dedicated graphics card, which betters the basic 3D performance offered by the Intel Core chip.

At a glance

See how the machines on test performed

NAME	BATTERY LIFE (MINS)	PERFORMANCE	GAMING
ACER ASPIRE 5749	169		
DELL INSPIRON 14Z	232		
FUJITSU AH530	130		
LENOVO Z570	173		
SONY VAIO VPCEH2F1E	173		
TOSHIBA SATELLITE PRO C660	96		

EXCELLENT GOOD POOR

Windows The Official Magazine

We recommend...

Shop with confidence; use our recommendations to ensure you always choose the best products for the lowest prices

Instant expert

Buying online

Shopping online can be a lot cheaper and more convenient than buying on the high street.

Precautions

1 Make sure that the site you are buying from is trustworthy. Stick to well-known websites, and if in doubt check out user reviews.

2 When you come to enter your card details, ensure the website address starts with https:// (rather than the normal http://). This means the page is encrypted so no one can read it and steal your data.

3 Always use a credit card for purchases over £100, because the card company is legally obliged to refund your money if you are not satisfied – even if the seller is based overseas.

COMPUTERS	THE BEST THERE IS...	BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...
LARGE-SCREEN LAPTOPS	**TOSHIBA QOSMIO X770-107** £1,699 ★★★★★ www.toshiba.co.uk A top portable home entertainment centre. Read more in issue 94	**PB EASYNOTE TS13-HR-035** £430 ★★★★☆ www.packardbell.co.uk Performance is strong, display is vibrant, with excellent networking capabilities. Read more in issue 60
MID-RANGE LAPTOPS	**ACER ASPIRE 5750G** £500 ★★★★★ www.acer.co.uk A great-value entertainment machine with strong performance and mobility. Read more in issue 62	**TOSHIBA SATELLITE C660** £397 ★★★★☆ www.toshiba.co.uk Very impressive feature set for the money, but poor build quality. Read more in issue 58
NETBOOKS	**LENOVO IDEAPAD U160** £389 ★★★★★ www.lenovo.com Large screen and keyboard yet it still remains compact and powerful. Read more in issue 56	**ACER ASPIRE ONE 721** £300 ★★★★☆ www.acer.co.uk Great compromise between laptop and netbook with large screen. Read more in issue 59

PHOTO & VIDEO	THE BEST THERE IS...	BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...
COMPACT DIGITAL CAMERAS	**OLYMPUS TOUGH TG-810** £211 ★★★★★ www.olympus.co.uk Shockproof, waterproof, plus takes 3D photos and has a GPS locator. Read more in issue 60	**CANON IXUS 130** £155 ★★★★★ www.canon.co.uk 14.1 megapixels, 4x optical zoom, HD movie mode and good price. Read more in issue 53
PHOTO-EDITING SOFTWARE	**ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 9** £53 ★★★★★ www.adobe.com A fantastically powerful suite. Read more in issue 52	**SERIF PHOTOPLUS X4** £51 ★★★★★ www.serif.com Powerful, yet easy-to-use, and capable of fantastic results. Read more in issue 52
DIGITAL PHOTO FRAMES	**JESSOPS 10.4-INCH SLIMLINE FRAME** £80 ★★★★☆ www.jessops.com All the features you need without being fancy. Read more in issue 58	**JESSOPS DIGITAL 8-INCH HI-RESOLUTION FRAME** £50 ★★★★☆ www.jessops.com A good frame with auto-rotate. Read more in issue 38
PHOTO PRINTING SERVICES	**PHOTOBOX** Varies ★★★★★ www.photobox.co.uk A range of services, such as calendars and photo books, at good prices. Read more in issue 48	**JESSOPS** Varies ★★★★☆ http://photo.jessops.com A good selection of services, with free delivery to your local store. Read more in issue 48
VIDEO CAMERAS	**PANASONIC HDC TM10** £246 ★★★★★ www.panasonic.co.uk Leading high-definition camcorder, this has it all in one package. Read more in issue 35	**TOSHIBA CAMILEO S20** £78 ★★★★★ www.toshiba.co.uk Great quality pocket camera, packed with features and a total bargain. Read more in issue 50
WEBCAMS	**MICROSOFT LIFECAM STUDIO** £50 ★★★★★ www.microsoft.com Excellent camera capable of fantastic footage. Read more in issue 61	**LOGITECH HD WEBCAM C270** £19 ★★★★☆ www.logitech.com Budget price but far from budget performance. Read more in issue 61

OUT & ABOUT	THE BEST THERE IS...	BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...
SMARTPHONES	**SAMSUNG OMNIA 7** £445 unlocked ★★★★☆ www.samsung.com/uk A little bit expensive, but the Super AMOLED screen is amazing. Read more in issue 60	**LG OPTIMUS 7** £192 unlocked ★★★★☆ www.lg.com/uk One of the cheapest Windows Phone 7 phones. Great features, quality camera. Read more in issue 60
MUSIC PLAYERS	**APPLE IPOD TOUCH** From £165 ★★★★★ www.apple.com The undisputed heavyweight champion of the MP3 playing world. Read more in issue 45	**SANDISK SANSA FUZE+ 8GB** £47 ★★★★★ www.sandisk.co.uk Optimum combination of price and functionality. Read more in issue 62
USB STORAGE STICKS	**CORSAIR FLASH VOYAGER GT 16GB** £21 ★★★★★ www.corsair.com Robust, fast, has USB extension lead. Read more in issue 55	**KINGSTON GENERATION 3 16GB DATATRAVELER** £11 ★★★★☆ www.kingston.com A great budget option. Read more in issue 55
LAPTOP BAGS	**OVERBOARD WATERPROOF MESSENGER BAG** £40 ★★★★☆ www.over-board.co.uk Dust-proof and waterproof but a little pricey. Read more in issue 57	**SPECK TUCKPACK** £24 ★★★★☆ www.speckproducts.com Stylish satchel for notebooks up to 13 inches; can fit into large bags. Read more in issue 63

ESSENTIALS	THE BEST THERE IS...	BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...
ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE	**NORTON INTERNET SECURITY 2011** £23 ★★★★★ www.symantec.co.uk Covers all the bases in style. Read more in issue 54	**MICROSOFT SECURITY ESSENTIALS** Free ★★★★★ www.microsoft.com/security_essentials Holds its own. Read more in issue 54
EXTERNAL HARD DRIVES	**LACIE 500GB RUGGED MINI** £80 ★★★★★ www.lacie.com This is the top end of portable drives – robust, fast and supports USB 3.0. Read more in issue 63	**SAMSUNG S2** £44 ★★★★★ www.samsung.com Includes everything you need to back up and store precious data. Read more in issue 48
MONITORS	**SAMSUNG SYNCMASTER F2380** £230 ★★★★☆ www.samsung.com Impressive build and video quality. Read more in issue 49	**BENQ V2410T** £176 ★★★★☆ http://benq.co.uk Great colour response and really good picture and video quality. Read more in issue 49
PRINTERS	**HP CN503B** £91 ★★★★★ www.hp.com A cracking printer. The touchscreen makes it nice and straightforward. Read more in issue 61	**KODAK ESP C310** £67 ★★★★☆ www.kodak.com Quick and easy to set up but a let-down when it comes to photo printing. Read more in issue 61
KEYBOARDS	**LOGITECH ILLUMINATED KEYBOARD** £68 ★★★★★ www.logitech.com A stunning, almost silent, wired keyboard. Read more in issue 44	**MICROSOFT WIRELESS DESKTOP 800** £18 ★★★★★ www.microsoft.com Lovely feel and comes with a mouse. Read more in issue 58
MICE	**MICROSOFT ARC TOUCH** £35 ★★★★☆ www.microsoft.com/hardware A bend turns it from wafer-thin to fully-functional. Replaces wheel with touch sensor. Read more in issue 54	**MICROSOFT WIRELESS MOUSE 5000** £18 ★★★★☆ www.microsoft.com/hardware Comfortable and perfect for laptops. Read more in issue 34
HEADSETS FOR INTERNET VIDEO AND VOICE CHAT	**LOGITECH WIRELESS GAMING HEADSET G930** £138 ★★★★☆ www.logitech.com Expensive but wireless and surround sound. Read more in issue 51	**PLANTRONICS .AUDIO 655 DSP** £26 ★★★★★ www.plantronics.com A rich, clear sound, and surprisingly cheap. Read more in issue 51
HEADPHONES	**SHURE SE115** £56 ★★★★★ www.shure.com Well worth the money if you take your music seriously and have the cash. Read more in issue 46	**SENNHEISER CX 271** £38 ★★★★☆ www.sennheiser.co.uk A great little pair of headphones if you don't want to go overboard on price. Read more in issue 46

Instant expert

The best price

If you type the name of a product into a search engine, it brings up a number of sites selling the item, enabling you to browse through each to find the best price. But there are faster ways to find it...

Find a bargain

1 Price comparison websites such as www.froogle.co.uk and www.kelkoo.co.uk list all the sites and their prices on one page, making it even easier.

2 Another great website is www.hotukdeals.com – it lists some of the best deals online, along with a voucher finder to save even more.

Jargon buster!

▶ Megapixel
Digital images are made up of squares known as pixels. A megapixel is one million pixels. The more pixels, the higher the image resolution, which means you can zoom in more or print larger images.

▶ Super AMOLED
This is Samsung's version of the AMOLED screen technology. This type of screen is good for phones because it's bright, colourful, viewable even in bright sunlight, and extremely thin.

WORLD OF WINDOWS

Free Office, email, video calling and more. You'll be amazed by these Windows add-ons. By James Stables

Having Windows on your computer is only the start of what you can do with your PC. Windows 7 (and, indeed, previous versions of Windows) can easily be enhanced by adding on extra functionality via the internet. These bolt-on features are all official, all from Microsoft, and all guaranteed to make your computer more pleasurable to use.

There is a whole suite of Windows Live apps available from http://explore.live.com, free to use. There's a world-class photo and video editor, mail clients for getting all your messages in one place, and a host of cloud-based services that help you to do more with your PC. Plus online Office apps that look and feel just like the normal Office, security software, online help and much, much more...

Windows

BETTER DESKTOP Windows 7 looks great and is easier to use than any previous version

WINDOWS 7

Windows 7 is the latest version of Windows that ships on most new computers. It delivers better networking, as well as more stable wireless and a whole new desktop experience, which enables you to pin items where you need them and snap windows to parts of the screen. Windows 7 can easily be enhanced with extra online features courtesy of Microsoft.

WINDOWS DESKTOP GADGETS

Windows Gadgets turn your empty desktop space into information-packed zones. Right-click on the desktop and choose **Gadgets** to pick from clocks, RSS feeds and so on, and go online for train times, magazines and much more.

MICROSOFT ANSWERS

From time to time we all have questions about our computer, and Microsoft Answers (http://answers.microsoft.com) is there to help you get the answers you need. The service enables you to have any uncertainties responded to by real experts, saving you time and giving you a helping hand.

GREAT CHOICE There are loads of themes to choose from, or you can download more

WINDOWS 7 THEMES

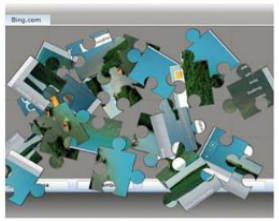
The beauty of Windows 7 is how customisable it is, and the new themes mean it's the best-looking version of the operating system so far. Just right-click, choose **Personalize** and click on the online gallery to choose from a range of themes with high-quality wallpapers, screensavers and complementary colours.

Online

STUNNING PHOTOS Bing isn't just about search – check out the amazing daily photos

BING

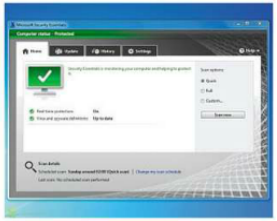
Most search engines help you to find what you want on the web, but Bing from Microsoft helps you to decide what you want to use it for. The search engine is great for narrowing down the results when you're looking for flights, holidays, shopping and other common tasks, and features some amazing pictures at www.bing.com too.



IT'S ALIVE Silverlight brings the internet to life, making websites that use it faster and more interactive

MICROSOFT SILVERLIGHT

Relatively unknown but fiercely powerful, Microsoft Silverlight brings rich animations to websites. Silverlight is the brains behind intelligent websites such as http://video.uk.msn.com, enabling your PC to stream video faster, with less stuttering and more enjoyment. If you haven't installed the Silverlight browser plug-in already, make sure you do soon.



FREE SECURITY Don't fork out for pricey protection, because with Windows, Security Essentials is all you need

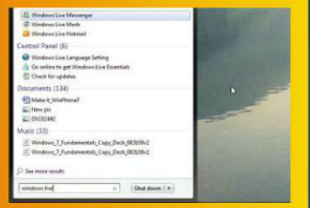
MICROSOFT SECURITY ESSENTIALS

Stop paying for security and use Microsoft Security Essentials instead. This free program is proven to stop as many nasties as paid-for antivirus software. Combined with Windows 7, it's a powerful barrier against viruses. Get it from www.microsoft.com/security_essentials.

FASTER WEB Internet Explorer 9 loads rich web experiences faster than other browsers

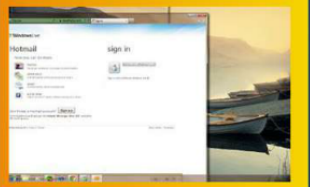
INTERNET EXPLORER 9

Enjoy the internet and get more done by using Internet Explorer 9. Microsoft's latest browser is faster than ever before, supports rich web experiences found in the latest online games, and is a fortress against malware as well. All of these features make Internet Explorer an excellent choice – get it from www.ie9.com.



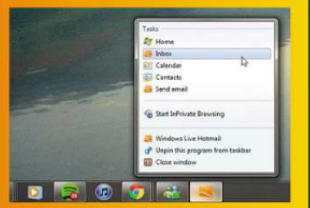
START SEARCH

Find the things you want fast, by using the Start search feature. To begin searching, just hit the **Windows** key and start typing the name of a file, a program or even the subject of an email. The results are displayed instantly, with the option to see more results if you wish, enabling you to find whatever you need quickly and easily.



AERO SNAP

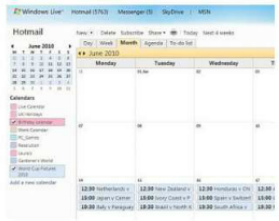
Windows 7 makes it easy to deal with your open windows, so that you can work faster and smarter. Simply drag a window to the top to maximise it in a snap, or to either side to have it fill half of the screen. This makes it easy for you to work in two windows at the same time, and you'll wonder how you lived without it.



JUMP LISTS

In Windows 7, the new toolbar enables you to use Jump Lists to gain access to your recent files. Just right-click on the icon for Windows Explorer, Office Word or Internet Explorer to find links to your last opened files. This is a great time-saver, especially if you need quick access to frequently used documents or other everyday items.

Windows Live



MULTIPLE CALENDARS You can run as many calendars as you like, so you'll never forget a birthday again

WINDOWS LIVE CALENDAR

A great free calendar, which helpfully syncs into Windows Live Mail and Windows Live Hotmail. You can have multiple calendars displayed at a time (for work, home and members of your family, for instance), plus you can set reminders and even have recurring events, so you don't forget important dates next year or even next decade.

IN THE LOOP Windows Live Messenger pulls in info from Twitter, Facebook and MSN

WINDOWS LIVE MESSENGER

One of Windows Live's biggest names, Windows Live Messenger is the most popular messaging service in the world. In 2011, alongside instant messaging, it offers top-quality video calling and games that you can play with your friends, as well as a seamless portal into the social networks of Facebook and Twitter.

MICROSOFT OFFICE 2010

It's still the most powerful Office application in the world, and few can live without Office Word, Excel and PowerPoint. It's now backed up by free Web Apps and Microsoft Office Starter on new PCs, which means that you can open Microsoft Office documents even if you don't have the full paid-for programs.

PROFESSIONAL LOOK You can customise your email, so it looks as slick as it would from a desktop program

PICTURE PERFECT Photo Gallery offers unrivalled power from a free program

WINDOWS LIVE PHOTO GALLERY

Windows Live Photo Gallery is a powerful picture editor, which enables you to sort, edit and share your snaps quickly and easily. As well as viewing your pictures, you can also improve them by cropping images and removing red-eye using the built-in tools. There's no better way of getting more from your memories.

WINDOWS LIVE HOTMAIL

One of the biggest webmail services in the world, Windows Live Hotmail sits perfectly alongside other programs such as Windows Live Messenger and Calendar for a seamless experience across the different applications. It also works with Windows Live Mail (see right), meaning that you can have Hotmail on your desktop.

WINDOWS LIVE MOVIE MAKER

A basic but free video editor, Windows Live Movie Maker offers unrivalled simplicity and speed when it comes to making home movies. You can use the built-in wizard to edit and share movies and memories in just one minute, and then add titles, sounds and effects, and output to YouTube or a DVD in seconds.

WINDOWS LIVE SKYDRIVE

Windows Live SkyDrive is a free service that's the storage behind most of Microsoft's cool free services. If you sign up for a Windows Live account, or are an existing member, then you automatically receive 25GB of free storage for your files, photos and documents, which can be accessed anywhere in the world.

FREE STORAGE Get 25GB for storing your documents and pictures online, and it's free!

WINDOWS LIVE WRITER

If you're a blogger, or someone who's always wanted to publish their work online, Windows Live Writer is for you. It syncs with most online blogging services, making it easier to write posts. What's more, you don't have to work in fiddly online systems, meaning that you just need to worry about what to write.

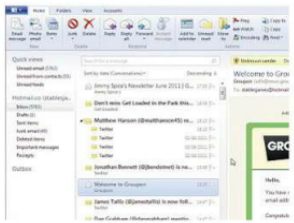
GET IN SYNC Have your documents available on any computer you use by syncing them using Windows Live Mesh

WINDOWS LIVE FAMILY SAFETY

Let your children use the PC with peace of mind using Windows Live Family Safety. It requires you to log in and then monitors accounts, blocks inappropriate content and requires social networking friends to be approved by a parent first. Not a replacement for supervision, but a great tool for parents.

WINDOWS LIVE MESH

Have you ever left a file at home and then found that you urgently need it elsewhere? Windows Live Mesh ends those woes by seamlessly syncing your PCs together, so that your files are available anywhere. Once synced, files appear on other PCs, and the service uses Windows Live SkyDrive, so they're available everywhere.



DESKTOP POWER Bring all of your email to your desktop using Windows Live Mail

WINDOWS LIVE MAIL

This nifty program brings mail to your desktop, no matter which provider you use. Windows Live Mail offers everything you need, enabling you to send and receive email from multiple accounts using separate inboxes. You can even use the excellent built-in calendar, and get news delivered to the RSS reader as well.

Where to get it...

WINDOWS LIVE ESSENTIALS

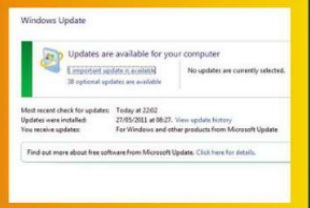
The apps you use on your desktop to enhance Windows
http://explore.live.com/windows-live-essentials

WINDOWS LIVE

Extra Windows features accessed through the internet
www.live.com

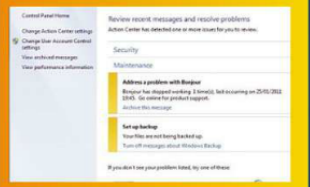
MICROSOFT OFFICE 2010

Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote on the web
www.officelive.com



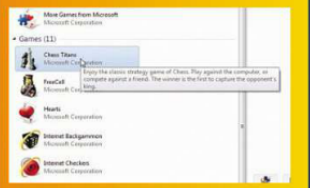
STAY UP TO DATE

Microsoft often releases updates for Windows and drivers for your PC's hardware, which keep it working at its best. As a result, it's a good idea to keep your system updated. Type **Windows Update** in Start search to check for critical or recommended updates and keep your machine in tip-top condition.



FIND PROBLEMS FAST

In Windows 7, all notifications are located in the Action Center, which is found in the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. Anything that requires attention about your system in terms of security and maintenance, from failed backups to security alerts, is stored here – without bothering you while you work.



GAMES EXPLORER

If you're a gamer, you'll be pleased to know that Windows 7 keeps all of your games in one place, so you don't have to hunt through cryptic menus. Just press **Start** and choose **Games** to find all of the built-in Windows titles, such as Chess Titans. When you install your own games, they're added here, too.

Play these...

A trio of new games available to play on your Windows computer

JOIN IN You can join friends' games any time, just don't drop in unannounced

YOU FIRST Group decision-making can be tricky if one person is trigger-happy

LARGER THAN LIFE Big things happen in the world of *The Old Republic*

Star Wars: The Old Republic

This one's got a long, bright future ahead of it

Price £36.99 **Web** www.swtor.com
Age rating 16 **Publisher** LucasArts
Developer LucasArts **Multiplayer** Yes
Requires 4.0 **Wants** 4.8

The Old Republic is an MMO and everything you do here is permanent, with unavoidable consequences. It's used to leverage player emotion and create some of the most engaging, moving story moments ever in an RPG.

All 17 of the game's worlds are brought to life with evocative architecture, meticulous set design and a convincing population. Many quest hubs are the size of small cities and they're teeming with realistic life.

TOR is an RPG, so you'll be gathering a crew, meeting interesting people, making moral choices, killing stuff and upgrading gear. You can choose to focus on healing, tanking, or DPS as one of the eight advanced classes available to each faction.

The sci-fi setting is put to terrific use in the game's consistently dazzling animations and spell effects. And, of course, every blaster blast and saber swing is enhanced with the familiar sound effects and music that the official licence grants.

Not so fresh are the game's quest mechanics, which are rudimentary. A few riddle dialogue quests pop up, but nothing revolutionary. That said, the novel Bonus Objective system does a fine job of breaking out grinding and making it a separate choice.

The ability to holo-call into groupmates' conversations from anywhere on the planet is liberating. But even though you can quest with others you might not want to. Making moral choices by committee can be tricky for control freaks. When a multiplayer conversation option pops up, everyone in your group selects the choice they want. Then a dice roll determines who gets to respond. For the rest, though, it's an awesome, unscripted RPG experience.

"The sci-fi setting is put to terrific use in the game's consistently dazzling animations and spell effects"

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★★★★

WEI score

▶ **Your PC's Windows Experience Index (WEI)**
The WEI measures the performance of each component in your PC, and gives you an overall score, so you get an idea of how well games will run on your computer. To find your PC's WEI, type **performance** into Start Search and open Performance Information and Tools. If you're running Windows Vista, click 'Update my score'. If you have Windows 7 installed on your PC, however, you should click 'Re-Run assessment' instead.

Minecraft

Simple look, awesome feel, huge experience

Price £16.95
Web www.minecraft.net
Age rating N/A **Publisher** Mojang Specifications
Developer Markus Persson
Multiplayer Yes **Requires** 2.0 **Wants** 3.0

Why is *Minecraft* one of the most famous indie games of all time? Versatility and near-infinite replayability – that's why. To begin with you start with absolutely nothing in a randomly generated world made of cubes, filled with various environments (known as biomes), as well as wildlife, with no tools or shelter.

At night-time the game takes a seriously sinister turn and monsters such as zombies and explosive Creepers come out to try to kill you. Your goal is to survive long enough to create deep mineshafts, where you'll gather the rare materials needed to reach the end-game goal.

In addition to the standard Survival mode, there's now Hardcore – which is like Survival, except your death is permanent – and Creative, which gives you infinite blocks of every type, unlimited health and the ability to fly. This mode is for those who just want to build.

All of these modes can be played on a multiplayer server, which can be especially rewarding, as you and others can build cooperatively at the same time, or marvel at each other's structures as you happen by them.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★★★☆

GRAND DESIGNS If you think something's possible in *Minecraft*, it probably is

WHAT. THE. HELL. Literally, what the hell – the more you mine, the deeper you go

Need For Speed: The Run

Not so much the American dream

Price £14.95
Web www.needforspeed.com/therun
Age rating 16 **Publisher** EA
Developer EA
Multiplayer Yes **Requires** 4.0 **Wants** 4.2

We've all got an idealised image of the great trans-American road trip: flooring the throttle down an arrow-straight road in a thunderously powerful V8 muscle car, listening to country music tunes on the radio.

In that regard *Need For Speed: The Run* nails it. This would be brilliant if the game didn't replicate the realities of a road trip as well, which include repetitive scenery and the boredom of maintaining a largely constant speed.

You play as Jack who's in trouble with the mob in San Francisco, but after talking his way out of a conversation with a car crusher he's offered the opportunity to race his way to freedom, which lies 3,000 miles away in New York. For a game that's apparently about reintroducing a plot to racing games, there's embarrassingly little to the narrative.

The action partly makes up for it, but it rarely takes advantage of its tightly controlled environment. There's a brilliant sequence that has you careening along a winding, snowy pass, dodging patches of black ice as an avalanche explodes around you. It's a glimpse of the game *The Run* could have been.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict ★★☆☆☆

LOOK AT ME Yes, it's a pretty car, posing in that centrefold way. Just let me drive the thing

METAL HEAVEN *The Run* is full of yank muscle and big, machine gun-wielding helicopters

Your disc

▶ FULL PRODUCTS ▶ HANDPICKED TOOLKITS ▶ ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

Welcome

Hello and welcome to your free disc, exclusive to *Windows: The Official Magazine*. This month's packed CD-ROM features a great full product, toolkits to help you get the best from your computer, and essential resources for every Windows user.

We have a real treat for you this issue – the full version of PowerDirector 8 Deluxe. This powerful video editing tool is just what you need to give your footage that pro touch and create movies that you'll treasure forever.

Simon Arblaster Disc editor
simon.arblaster@futurenet.com

This issue's highlight

54 Use PowerDirector 8 Deluxe to create professional-quality movies that'll give you lasting memories and wow your family and friends

Step-by-step | How to use your free disc

1 Get started
Place your free disc into your computer's disc drive. The AutoPlay prompt should appear on your screen and once this has happened, click **Run OWV.exe** to start up the disc interface. A new window appears, telling you some important information. Read it, then click on **I agree** to continue.

2 Browse the categories
Click on one of the categories in the menu underneath the magazine logo to discover all the programs that are contained in each. Simply click on an app's name to find out more about it. Full commercial products usually have information about how to register. To try out an app, just click the **Install Now** button.

FIND THE SOLUTION! ***How to get your disc to play***
*If the disc doesn't start automatically, hit the **Windows** key, then click **Computer**. Now double click the DVD drive to get going.*

MISSING YOUR DISC?
PLEASE CONTACT YOUR RETAILER

3 Install the program
When you begin to install your chosen applications, the disc brings up another message window to take you through the installation process. Each one of these is different – just follow the prompts until you get a message telling you that the installation is complete. Now it's time to try out your free apps – have fun!

If you have a problem...

Please visit www.futurenet.com/support. To contact our reader support team, email support@futurenet.com or call 01225 822743, quoting the magazine name and issue. We are only able to provide help with this disc, not the software contained on it.

Full disc contents

FULL PROGRAM
- CyberLink PowerDirector 8 Deluxe

DIGITAL MEDIA
- Automatic Cover Tool
- DoubleTwist
- DVD Styler
- Fusion
- Handbrake
- Hugin
- Machete
- MediaMonkey Standard
- Oxelon
- PhotoFilmStrip
- Songler
- VirtualDub
- WinGrooves
- XBMC

LAPTOP TOOLS
- AbiWord
- Aerofoil
- BatteryCare
- DimScreen
- Joulemeter
- Laptop Buddy
- Money Manager Ex
- Monitor ES
- Power Scheme Switcher
- SharpKeys
- SmartPower
- StrokeIt Home
- System Silencer
- Writemonkey

RESOURCES
- Foxit reader
- Internet Explorer 9
- Microsoft Security Essentials
- Secunia Personal Software Inspector
- Windows Live Essentials

WORK BETTER ONLINE WITH UK DATA CENTRES

Everything you need to work better online from Fasthosts

That's not just a web-hosting package, a domain name, a virtual or dedicated server, broadband, hosted email or online backup. **It's technology based in the UK**.

You don't want to keep your customers waiting. And by choosing technology that's **based in the UK**, your customers in the **UK** will find websites load faster. Plus, with **24/7 support** via the phone and online we're here whenever you need us.

There are many reasons why a **UK data centre** is a good idea, but, surely, that's the most important.

Find out how your business can work better online
call ***free*** *on* ***0800 6520 444***
or visit ***www.fasthosts.co.uk***

You'll find some great offers there too.

fasthosts™

hosting | domains | dedicated & virtual servers | reseller hosting | online backup

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